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# RIVERSIDE LITERATURE SERIES

## THE PRISONER OF CHILLON AND OTHER POEMS

BY  
LORD BYRON

WITH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH  
INTRODUCTIONS AND  
NOTES



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THE PRISONER OF CHILLON  
AND OTHER POEMS

BY  
LORD BYRON  
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WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH  
INTRODUCTIONS AND NOTES



HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY  
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# LORD BYRON.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

GEORGE GORDON, Lord Byron, was born in London January 22, 1788. He was not in the direct line of the peerage, and when his father died in 1791, he was a poor boy, left in the care of a mother who was incompetent to give him a judicious training. When, by a succession of deaths in the family, he came at ten years of age into possession of a title and of the family estate of Newstead Abbey, he was already warped in mind as he was somewhat deformed in body, being lame from a club-foot. He had his schooling at Harrow, where he was known as a shy, somewhat ungovernable, passionate boy, who formed ardent attachments and took a fierce delight in such sport as he could engage in. It was said that he chose the most ferocious animals for his pets, and he was violent in his expressions. He had, indeed, a large, rich nature, which seemed constantly to be coming under unhappy influences, and from an early day he had a way of hiding his best emotions under a show of indifference and swagger, so that what was at first a kind of mask became in the end almost his familiar countenance.

He passed from Harrow to Trinity College, Cambridge. Both at school and in college he found an outlet for his moods in verse; this was called out by the attachments he formed and by special occasions,

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for he always seemed to be swayed by emotions which circumstance or adventure brought to the surface. He published a collection of these poems when he was nineteen, under the title *The Hours of Idleness*, and the *Edinburgh Review*, which was casting about for something to bully, fell upon the book with great scorn. Byron retorted with a savage piece of sarcasm, called *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, which made him better known than his original volume. He took his seat in the House of Lords, but though he had a genius for declamatory speech, he had little interest in the details of government, and he found, moreover, or made, very few friends, so that very shortly he left England with his friend Hobhouse, and spent two years of travel in Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Turkey.

On his return, he found himself in a very embarrassed condition as regards his property; his mother died, and some of his nearest friends, and he was left much alone to the increase of his morbid temper. But during his absence he had begun a poem which, almost in the form of a journal in verse, contained the copious discharge of his poetic feelings, which was now rich in emotion, now satiric and splenetic. This poem was *Childe Harold*, of which he at first published but two cantos. In speaking of the effect of its publication, he wrote: "I awoke one morning and found myself famous." His position was at once changed; from being neglected and solitary, he became the idol of society. In succession, during the two or three years that followed, appeared *The Giaour*, *The Bride of Abydos*, *The Corsair*, and *Hebrew Melodies*, and Byron's position was that of a *very popular poet*.

He married, January 2, 1815, Miss Milbanke, a beautiful girl, who won his great admiration and whom he had ardently pursued, but whose temperament was precisely the one most ill adapted to master his ungovernable nature. They had one child, Augusta Ada, but little more than a year elapsed after they were married before Lady Byron returned to her father's house and Lord Byron signed a deed of separation.

He made some show in print of his domestic affairs, and the world in which he lived took up the quarrel, for the most part pronouncing against him. In consequence Lord Byron left England in the spring of 1816, never to return. For the next seven years he lived in Switzerland and Italy, and in this period wrote his most notable poetry, more of *Childe Harold*, *The Prisoner of Chillon*, *The Dream*, *Mazeppa*, *Don Juan*. He was intimate with Shelley, he was most generous to Leigh Hunt, and he became involved in certain revolutionary movements in Italy. His life was in a manner lawless, as if he had cast away all restraint, but his restless spirit broke forth into impassioned verse, and he wrote poems which flow like rushing turbulent streams through the placid meadows of contemporaneous English literature.

In April, 1823, he began a correspondence with the men who in Greece were attempting the overthrow of Turkish rule, and in July he resolved to throw himself and his fortune into the cause. Accordingly with some friends, some supplies, and some arms, he left Italy for Greece, and though he was somewhat disappointed in the character of his new compatriots, he was steadfast in his enthusiasm. He received an appointment as commander of an expedition against

Lepanto, and showed both bravery and high wisdom in the conduct of the expedition; it failed, but he turned his attention to the fortification of Missolonghi. In the midst of his labors he was taken ill, and after a short sickness, he died April 19, 1824. Public honors were paid to his memory in Greece, and his body was carried back to England, to be buried in the family vault near Newstead.

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## THE PRISONER OF CHILLON.

A FABLE.

### INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE words "a fable" which Byron added to the title of this poem should put one on his guard against taking the poem as an historical narrative, or treating it in its parts as true to the literal facts of Bonnivard's experience. Byron wrote the poem in June, 1816, at a small inn in the little village of Ouchy, near Lausanne on the shores of Lake Geneva, where he happened to be detained a couple of days by stress of weather. In a notice prefixed to the poem he wrote: "When this poem was composed, I was not sufficiently aware of the history of Bonnivard, or I should have endeavored to dignify the subject by an attempt to celebrate his courage and his virtues." As it was he had been stirred by the tradition of the patriot's confinement in the castle which he had just visited, and with his ardent passion for political liberty which found expression later in Italy and in Greece, he used the incident for an impassioned poetic monologue.

The tourist to-day who visits the castle of Chillon finds abundant historical information respecting the castle and the confinement of Bonnivard. Byron's poem has lifted the place into great distinction. The castle stands on a rock in the lake, not far from Montreux, and is approached by a bridge. In the interior is a range of dungeons. Eight pillars are shown, one of which is half built into the wall. The prisoners, who were sometimes reformers, sometimes prisoners of state, were fettered to the pillars, and the pavement is worn with the footsteps of their brief pace. Francis Bonnivard was born in 1496. He was of gentle birth and inherited a rich priory near Geneva. When the Duke of Savoy attacked the republic of Geneva, Bonnivard joined in the defence, and became thus the enemy of the Duke. Subsequently, when in the service of the republic, he fell into the power of the Duke, who imprisoned him for six years in the castle of Chillon. He was released by the Genevese in 1538, and led a stormy existence until his death in 1571.

## I.

MY hair is gray, but not with years,  
Nor grew it white  
In a single night,  
As men's have grown from sudden fears.  
5 My limbs are bowed, though not with toil,  
But rusted with a vile repose,  
For they have been a dungeon's spoil,  
And mine has been the fate of those  
To whom the goodly earth and air  
10 Are banned, and barred — forbidden fare ;  
But this was for my father's faith  
I suffered chains and courted death ;  
That father perished at the stake  
For tenets he would not forsake ;  
15 And for the same his lineal race  
In darkness found a dwelling-place ;  
We were seven — who now are one,  
Six in youth, and one in age,  
Finished as they had begun,  
20 Proud of Persecution's rage ;  
One in fire, and two in field,  
Their belief with blood have sealed :  
Dying as their father died,  
For the God their foes denied ; —  
25 Three were in a dungeon cast,  
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

## II.

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould  
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,  
There are seven columns massy and gray,  
30 *Dim with a dull imprisoned ray,*

A sunbeam which hath lost its way,  
And through the crevice and the cleft  
Of the thick wall is fallen and left :  
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,  
35 Like a marsh's meteor lamp :  
And in each pillar there is a ring,  
And in each ring there is a chain ;  
That iron is a cankering thing,  
For in these limbs its teeth remain,  
40 With marks that will not wear away  
Till I have done with this new day,  
Which now is painful to these eyes,  
Which have not seen the sun so rise  
For years — I cannot count them o'er,  
45 I lost their long and heavy score  
When my last brother drooped and died,  
And I lay living by his side.

## III.

They chained us each to a column stone,  
And we were three — yet, each alone ;  
50 We could not move a single pace,  
We could not see each other's face,  
But with that pale and livid light  
That made us strangers in our sight :  
And thus together — yet apart,  
55 Fettered in hand, but joined in heart ;  
'T was still some solace, in the dearth  
Of the pure elements of earth,  
To hearken to each other's speech,  
And each turn comforter to each

31. One of the impressive sights in the dungeon now, as it was in Byron's day, is the beams of the setting sun streaming through the narrow loopholes into the gloomy recesses.

60 With some new hope or legend old,  
Or song heroically bold ;  
But even these at length grew cold.  
Our voices took a dreary tone,  
An echo of the dungeon stone,  
65 A grating sound — not full and free  
As they of yore were wont to be ;  
It might be fancy — but to me  
They never sounded like our own.

## IV.

I was the eldest of the three,  
70 And to uphold and cheer the rest  
I ought to do — and did my best —  
And each did well in his degree.  
The youngest, whom my father loved,  
Because our mother's brow was given  
75 To him — with eyes as blue as heaven,  
For him my soul was sorely moved :  
And truly might it be distressed  
To see such bird in such a nest ;  
For he was beautiful as day —  
80 (When day was beautiful to me  
As to young eagles being free) —  
A polar day, which will not see  
A sunset till its summer's gone,  
Its sleepless summer of long light,  
85 The snow-clad offspring of the sun :  
And thus he was as pure and bright,  
And in his natural spirit gay,  
With tears for naught but others' ills,  
And then they flowed like mountain rills,  
90 Unless he could assuage the woe  
*Which he abhorred to view below.*

## V.

The other was as pure of mind,  
But formed to combat with his kind ;  
Strong in his frame, and of a mood  
96 Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,  
And perished in the foremost rank  
With joy : — but not in chains to pine :  
His spirit withered with their clank,  
I saw it silently decline —  
100 And so perchance in sooth did mine :  
But yet I forced it on to cheer  
Those relics of a home so dear.  
He was a hunter of the hills,  
Had followed there the deer and wolf ;  
106 To him this dungeon was a gulf,  
And fettered feet the worst of ills.

## VI.

Lake Lemman lies by Chillon's walls,  
A thousand feet in depth below  
Its massy waters meet and flow ;  
110 Thus much the fathom-line was sent  
From Chillon's snow-white battlement,  
Which round about the wave intrals :  
A double dungeon wall and wave  
Have made — and like a living grave.  
115 Below the surface of the lake  
The dark vault lies wherein we lay,  
We heard it ripple night and day ;  
Sounding o'er our heads it knocked  
And I have felt the winter's spray  
120 Wash through the bars when winds were high  
107. *Lake Lemman* is another name for *Lake Geneva*.

And wanton in the happy sky ;  
And then the very rock hath rocked,  
And I have felt it shake, unshocked,  
Because I could have smiled to see  
125 The death that would have set me free.

## VII.

I said my nearer brother pined,  
I said his mighty heart declined,  
He loathed and put away his food ;  
It was not that 't was coarse and rude,  
130 For we were used to hunter's fare,  
And for the like had little care :  
The milk drawn from the mountain goat  
Was changed for water from the moat,  
Our bread was such as captive's tears  
135 Have moistened many a thousand years,  
Since man first pent his fellow men  
Like brutes within an iron den ;  
But what were these to us or him ?  
These wasted not his heart or limb ;  
140 My brother's soul was of that mould  
Which in a palace had grown cold,  
Had his free breathing been denied  
The range of the steep mountain's side  
But why delay the truth ? — he died.  
145 I saw, and could not hold his head,  
Nor reach his dying hand — nor dead, —  
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,  
To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.  
He died, and they unlocked his chain,  
150 And scooped for him a shallow grave  
Even from the cold earth of our cave.  
I begged them, as a boon, to lay

His corse in dust whereon the day  
 Might shine — it was a foolish thought,  
 155 But then within my brain it wrought,  
 That even in death his freeborn breast  
 In such a dungeon could not rest.  
 I might have spared my idle prayer —  
 They coldly laughed — and laid him there :  
 160 The flat and turfless earth above  
 The being we so much did love ;  
 His empty chain above it leant,  
 Such murder's fitting monument !

## VIII.

But he, the favorite and the flower,  
 165 Most cherished since his natal hour,  
 His mother's image in fair face,  
 The infant love of all his race,  
 His martyred father's dearest thought,  
 My latest care, for whom I sought  
 170 To hoard my life, that his might be  
 Less wretched now, and one day free ;  
 He, too, who yet had held untired  
 A spirit natural or inspired —  
 He, too, was struck, and day by day  
 175 Was withered on the stalk away. .  
 Oh, God ! it is a fearful thing  
 To see the human soul take wing  
 In any shape, in any mood : —  
 I've seen it rushing forth in blood,  
 180 I've seen it on the breaking ocean  
 Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,  
 I've seen the sick and ghastly bed  
 Of Sin delirious with its dread :  
 But these were horrors — this was



185 Unmixed with such — but sure and slow ;  
He faded, and so calm and meek,  
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,  
So tearless, yet so tender — kind,  
And grieved for those he left behind ;  
190 With all the while a cheek whose bloom  
Was as a mockery of the tomb,  
Whose tints as gently sunk away  
As a departing rainbow's ray —  
An eye of most transparent light,  
195 That almost made the dungeon bright,  
And not a word of murmur — not  
A groan o'er his untimely lot, —  
A little talk of better days,  
A little hope my own to raise,  
200 For I was sunk in silence — lost  
In this last loss, of all the most ;  
And then the sighs he would suppress  
Of fainting nature's feebleness,  
More slowly drawn, grew less and less :  
205 I listened, but I could not hear —  
I called, for I was wild with fear ;  
I knew 't was hopeless, but my dread  
Would not be thus admonishèd ;  
I called, and thought I heard a sound —  
210 I burst my chain with one strong bound,  
And rushed to him : — I found him not,  
I only stirred in this black spot,  
I only lived — I only drew  
The accursed breath of dungeon-dew ;  
215 The last — the sole — the dearest link  
Between me and the eternal brink,  
Which bound me to my failing race,  
*Was broken in this fatal place.*

One on the earth, and one beneath —  
220 My brothers — both had ceased to breathe;  
I took that hand which lay so still,  
Alas! my own was full as chill;  
I had not strength to stir, or strive,  
But felt that I was still alive —  
225 A frantic feeling, when we know  
That what we love shall ne'er be so.  
I know not why  
I could not die,  
I had no earthly hope — but faith,  
230 And that forbade a selfish death.

## IX.

What next befell me then and there  
I know not well — I never knew —  
First came the loss of light, and air,  
And then of darkness too:  
235 I had no thought, no feeling — none —  
Among the stones I stood a stone,  
And was, scarce conscious what I wist,  
As shrubless crags within the mist;  
For all was blank, and bleak, and gray,  
240 It was not night — it was not day,  
It was not even the dungeon-light,  
So hateful to my heavy sight,  
But vacancy absorbing space,  
And fixedness — without a place;  
245 There were no stars — no earth — no time —  
No check — no change — no good — no crime —  
But silence, and a stirless breath  
Which neither was of life nor death;  
A sea of stagnant idleness,  
250 Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless!

## X.

A light broke in upon my brain, —  
It was the carol of a bird ;  
It ceased, and then it came again,  
The sweetest song ear ever heard,  
255 And mine was thankful till my eyes  
Ran over with the glad surprise,  
And they that moment could not see  
I was the mate of misery ;  
But then by dull degrees came back  
260 My senses to their wonted track,  
I saw the dungeon walls and floor  
Close slowly round me as before,  
I saw the glimmer of the sun  
Creeping as it before had done,  
265 But through the crevice where it came  
That bird was perched, as fond and tame,  
And tamer than upon the tree ;  
A lovely bird, with azure wings,  
And song that said a thousand things,  
270 And seemed to say them all for me !  
I never saw its like before,  
I ne'er shall see its likeness more :  
It seemed like me to want a mate,  
But was not half so desolate,  
275 And it was come to love me when  
None lived to love me so again,  
And cheering from my dungeon's brink,  
Had brought me back to feel and think.  
I know not if it late were free,  
280 Or broke its cage to perch on mine,  
But knowing well captivity,  
*Sweet bird ! I could not wish for thine !*

Or if it were, in wingèd guise,  
A visitant from Paradise ;  
285 For — Heaven forgive that thought ! the while  
Which made me both to weep and smile ;  
I sometimes deemed that it might be  
My brother's soul come down to me ;  
But then at last away it flew,  
290 And then 't was mortal — well I knew,  
For he would never thus have flown,  
And left me twice so doubly lone, —  
Lone — as the corse within its shroud,  
Lone — as a solitary cloud,  
295 A single cloud on a sunny day,  
While all the rest of heaven is clear,  
A frown upon the atmosphere,  
That hath no business to appear  
When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

## XI.

300 A kind of change came in my fate,  
My keepers grew compassionate ;  
I know not what had made them so,  
They were inured to sights of woe,  
But so it was : — my broken chain  
305 With links unfastened did remain,  
And it was liberty to stride  
Along my cell from side to side,  
And up and down, and then athwart,  
And tread it over every part ;  
310 And round the pillars one by one,  
Returning where my walk begun,  
Avoiding only, as I trod,  
My brothers' graves without a sod ;  
For if I thought with heedless tread

315 My step profaned their lowly bed,  
My breath came gaspingly and thick,  
And my crushed heart fell blind and sick.

## XII.

I made a footing in the wall,  
It was not therefrom to escape,  
320 For I had buried one and all  
Who loved me in a human shape ;  
And the whole earth would henceforth be  
A wider prison unto me :  
No child — no sire — no kin had I,  
325 No partner in my misery ;  
I thought of this, and I was glad,  
For thought of them had made me mad ;  
But I was curious to ascend  
To my barred windows, and to bend  
330 Once more, upon the mountains high,  
The quiet of a loving eye.

## XIII.

I saw them — and they were the same,  
They were not changed like me in frame ;  
I saw their thousand years of snow  
335 On high — their wide long lake below,  
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow ;  
I heard the torrents leap and gush  
O'er channelled rock and broken bush ;  
I saw the white-walled distant town,  
340 And whiter sails go skimming down ;  
And then there was a little isle,

341. Between the entrances of the Rhone and Villeneuve, not far from Chillon, is a very small island; the only one I could perceive, in my voyage round and over the lake, within its cir-

Which in my very face did smile,  
The only one in view ;  
A small green isle it seemed no more,  
345 Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,  
But in it there were three tall trees,  
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,  
And by it there were waters flowing,  
And on it there were young flowers growing,  
350 Of gentle breath and hue.  
The fish swam by the castle wall,  
And they seemed joyous each and all ;  
The eagle rode the rising blast,  
Methought he never flew so fast  
355 As then to me he seemed to fly,  
And then new tears came in my eye,  
And I felt troubled — and would fain  
I had not left my recent chain ;  
And when I did descend again,  
360 The darkness of my dim abode  
Fell on me as a heavy load ;  
It was as is a new-dug grave,  
Closing o'er one we sought to save, —  
And yet my glance, too much oppressed,  
365 Had almost need of such a rest.

## XIV.

It might be months, or years, or days,  
I kept no count — I took no note,  
I had no hope my eyes to raise,  
And clear them of their dreary mote ;  
370 At last men came to set me free,

cumference. It contains a few trees (I think not above three), and from its singleness and diminutive size has a peculiar effect upon the view. BYRON.

I asked not why, and recked not where,  
 It was at length the same to me,  
 Fettered or fetterless to be,

I learned to love despair.

375 And thus when they appeared at last,  
 And all my bonds aside were cast,  
 These heavy walls to me had grown  
 A hermitage — and all my own !  
 And half I felt as they were come

380 To tear me from a second home :  
 With spiders I had friendship made,  
 And watched them in their sullen trade,  
 Had seen the mice by moonlight play,  
 And why should I feel less than they ?

385 We were all inmates of one place,  
 And I, the monarch of each race,  
 Had power to kill — yet, strange to tell !  
 In quiet we had learned to dwell —  
 My very chains and I grew friends,  
 390 So much a long communion tends  
 To make us what we are : — even I  
 Regained my freedom with a sigh.

### SONNET ON CHILLON.

ETERNAL Spirit of the chainless Mind !  
 Brightest in dungeons, Liberty ! thou art,  
 For there thy habitation is the heart —  
 The heart which love of thee alone can bind ;  
 5 And when thy sons to fetters are consigned —  
 To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,  
 Their country conquers with their martyrdom,  
*And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.*



Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,  
 10 And thy sad floor an altar — for 't was trod,  
 Until his very steps have left a trace  
 Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,  
 By Bonnivard! — May none those marks efface!  
 For they appeal from tyranny to God.

## FARE THEE WELL.

[Written in the spring of 1816, just after the separation from  
 Lady Byron.]

Alas! they had been friends in Youth;  
 But whispering tongues can poison truth;  
 And constancy lives in realms above;  
 And Life is thorny; and youth is vain:  
 And to be wroth with one we love,  
 Doth work like madness in the brain;

. . . . .  
 But never either found another  
 To free the hollow heart from paining —  
 They stood aloof, the scars remaining,  
 Like cliffs, which had been rent asunder;  
 A dreary sea now flows between,  
 But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder  
 Shall wholly do away, I ween,  
 The marks of that which once hath been.

COLERIDGE'S *Christabel*.

FARE thee well! and if forever,  
 Still forever, fare thee well:  
 Even though unforgiving, never  
 'Gainst thee shall my heart rebel.

5 Would that breast were bared before thee  
 Where thy head so oft hath lain,  
 While that placid sleep came o'er thee  
 Which thou ne'er canst know again:

Would that breast, by thee glanced over,  
10 Every inmost thought could show !  
Then thou wouldst at last discover  
'T was not well to spurn it so.

Though the world for this commend thee —  
Though it smile upon the blow,  
15 Even its praises must offend thee,  
Founded on another's woe :

Though my many faults defaced me,  
Could no other arm be found,  
Than the one which once embraced me,  
20 To inflict a cureless wound ?

Yet, oh yet, thyself deceive not ;  
Love may sink by slow decay,  
But by sudden wrench, believe not  
Hearts can thus be torn away :

25 Still thine own its life retaineth —  
Still must mine, though bleeding, beat ;  
And the undying thought which paineth  
Is — that we no more may meet.

These are words of deeper sorrow  
30 Than the wail above the dead ;  
Both shall live, but every morrow  
Wake us from a widowed bed.

And when thou would solace gather,  
When our child's first accents flow,  
35 Wilt thou teach her to say " Father ! "  
*Though his care she must forego ?*

When her little hands shall press thee,  
When her lip to thine is pressed,  
Think of him whose prayer shall bless thee,  
40 Think of him thy love had blessed !

Should her lineaments resemble  
Those thou never more mayst see,  
Then thy heart will softly tremble  
With a pulse yet true to me.

45 All my faults perchance thou knowest,  
All my madness none can know ;  
All my hopes, where'er thou goest,  
60 Wither, yet with *thee* they go.

Every feeling hath been shaken ;  
50 Pride, which not a world could bow,  
Bows to thee — by thee forsaken,  
Even my soul forsakes me now :

But 't is done — all words are idle —  
Words from me are vainer still ;  
55 But the thoughts we cannot bridle  
Force their way without the will. —

Fare thee well ! — thus disunited,  
Torn from every nearer tie,  
Seared in heart, and lone, and blighted,  
60 More than this I scarce can die.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> To many [this poem] appeared a strain of true conjugal tenderness, — a kind of appeal which no woman with a heart could resist ; while by others, on the contrary, it was considered to be a mere showy effusion of sentiment, as difficult for real feeling to have produced as it was easy for fancy and art, and altogether unworthy of the deep interests involved in the

subject. To this latter opinion I confess my own to have, at first, strongly inclined, and suspicious as I could not help thinking the sentiment that could, at such a moment, indulge in such verses, the taste that prompted or sanctioned their publication appeared to me even still more questionable. On reading, however, his own account of all the circumstances in the Memoranda, I found that on both points I had, in common with a large portion of the public, done him injustice. He there described, and in a manner whose sincerity there was no doubting, the swell of tender recollections under the influence of which, as he sat one night musing in his study, these stanzas were produced,—the tears, as he said, falling fast over the paper as he wrote them. Neither did it appear, from that account, to have been from any wish or intention of his own, but through the injudicious zeal of a friend whom he had suffered to take a copy, that the verses met the public eye. THOMAS MOORE.

### HEBREW MELODIES.

Byron wrote, in 1815, a number of songs which were set to music. Most of the poems derived their subject from incidents taken from the Old Testament, and were contributed to a volume entitled *Selection of Hebrew Melodies*, and the above title is given to a group in Byron's poems, though the first that follows had no Biblical association, but was written on returning from a ball, where Lady Wilmot Horton had appeared in mourning, with numerous spangles on her dress.

#### SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY.

SHE walks in beauty, like the night  
 Of cloudless climes and starry skies;  
 And all that's best of dark and bright  
 Meet in her aspect and her eyes:  
 Thus mellowed to that tender light  
 Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,  
 Had half impaired the nameless grace,

Which waves in every raven tress,  
 10 Or softly lightens o'er her face ;  
 Where thoughts serenely sweet express  
 How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,  
 So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,  
 15 The smiles that win, the tints that glow,  
 But tell of days in goodness spent.  
 A mind at peace with all below,  
 A heart whose love is innocent !

THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB.

THE Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold,  
 And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold ;  
 And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the  
 sea,  
 When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

5 Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,  
 That host with their banners at sunset were seen :  
 Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath  
 blown,  
 That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the  
 blast,  
 10 And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed ;  
 And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and  
 chill,  
 And their hearts but once heaved, and forever grew  
 still !

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,  
 But through it there rolled not the breath of his  
 pride ;  
 15 And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,  
 And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,  
 With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail,  
 And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,  
 20 The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,  
 And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal ;  
 And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the  
 sword,  
 Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord !

#### JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER.

See the eleventh and twelfth chapters of the Book of Judges.

SINCE our country, our God — oh, my Sire !  
 Demand that thy daughter expire ;  
 Since thy triumph was bought by thy vow —  
 Strike the bosom that's bared for thee now !

5 And the voice of my mourning is o'er,  
 And the mountains behold me no more :  
 If the hand that I love lay me low,  
 There cannot be pain in the blow !

And of this, oh, my Father ! be sure —  
 10 That the blood of thy child is as pure  
 As the blessing I beg ere it flow,  
 And the last thought that soothes me below.

Though the virgins of Salem lament,  
 Be the judge and the hero unbent !  
 15 I have won the great battle for thee,  
 And my Father and Country are free !

When this blood of thy giving hath gush'd,  
 When the voice that thou lovest is hush'd,  
 Let my memory still be thy pride,  
 20 And forget not I smiled as I died !

# ON A DISTANT VIEW OF THE VILLAGE AND SCHOOL OF HARROW ON THE HILL.

This was one of Byron's early poems, written in 1806, and interesting as a not too distant retrospect, since he left Harrow in 1805. Gray's poem, "On a Distant Prospect of Eton College," which may easily have been in Byron's mind, was written when the poet was twenty-six, and when he had been out of school about eight years.

Oh ! mihi præteritos referat si Jupiter annos. — VIRGIL.<sup>1</sup>

YE scenes of my childhood, whose loved recollection  
 Embitters the present, compared with the past ;  
 Where science first dawn'd on the powers of reflection,  
 And friendships were form'd, too romantic to last ;

5 Where fancy yet joys to retrace the resemblance  
 Of comrades, in friendship and mischief allied ;

<sup>1</sup> The quotation from Virgil may be rendered, "Would God I had my past years back again !"

4. "My school friendships were with me *passions* (for I was always violent), but I do not know that there is one which has endured (to be sure some have been cut short by death) till now." BYRON'S *Diary*, 1821.

How welcome to me your ne'er fading remembrance,  
Which rests in the bosom, though hope is denied !

Again I revisit the hills where we sported,  
10 The streams where we swam, and the fields where  
we fought ;  
The school where, loud warn'd by the bell, we re-  
sorted,  
To pore o'er the precepts by pedagogues taught.

Again I behold where for hours I have ponder'd,  
As reclining, at eve, on yon tombstone I lay ;  
15 Or round the steep brow of the churchyard I wan-  
der'd,  
To catch the last gleam of the sun's setting ray.

I once more view the room, with spectators sur-  
rounded,  
Where, as Zanga, I trod on Alonzo o'erthrown ;  
While, to swell my young pride, such applauses  
resounded,  
20 I fancied that Mossop himself was outshone :

Or, as Lear, I pour'd forth the deep imprecation,  
By my daughters, of kingdom and reason de-  
prived ;

10. "At Harrow I fought my way very fairly. I think I lost but one battle out of seven." *Diary*.

14. "A tomb in the churchyard at Harrow was so well known to be his favorite resting-place, that the boys called it 'Byron's Tomb;' and here, they say, he used to sit for hours, wrapt up in thought." MOORE.

20. Mossop was a contemporary of Garrick, and took the part of Zanga in the play *The Revenge*, written by William Young, author of *Night Thoughts*.



Till, fired by loud plaudits and self-adulation,  
I regarded myself as a Garrick revived.

25 Ye dreams of my boyhood, how much I regret you !  
Unfaded your memory dwells in my breast ;  
Though sad and deserted, I ne'er can forget you :  
Your pleasures may still be in fancy possess.

To Ida full oft may remembrance restore me,  
30 While fate shall the shades of the future unroll !  
Since darkness o'ershadows the prospect before  
me,  
More dear is the beam of the past to my soul.

But if, through the course of the years which await  
me,  
Some new scene of pleasure should open to view,  
35 I will say, while with rapture the thought shall elate  
me,  
“ Oh ! such were the days which my infancy  
knew ! ”

MAID OF ATHENS, ERE WE PART.

*Zōn mou, ós ártaō.*<sup>1</sup>

MAID of Athens, ere we part,  
Give, oh, give me back my heart !

<sup>1</sup> Byron's note to the Greek motto, which in English sounds may be read *zō-ā moo sahs ahgāpō*, is as follows: “ Romaic expression of tenderness: If I translate it, I shall affront the gentlemen, as it may seem that I supposed they could not; and if I do not, I may affront the ladies. For fear of any misconstruction on the part of the latter, I shall do so, begging pardon of the learned. It means, ‘ My life, I love you ! ’ which sounds very prettily in all languages, and is as much in fashion, in Greece at this day

Or, since that has left my breast,  
 Keep it now, and take the rest !  
 5 Hear my vow before I go,  
*Ζώη μου, σάς αγαπῶ.*

By those tresses unconfined,  
 Woo'd by each Ægean wind ;  
 By those lids whose jetty fringe  
 10 Kiss thy soft cheeks' blooming tinge ;  
 By those wild eyes like the roe,  
*Ζώη μου, σάς αγαπῶ.*

By that lip I long to taste ;  
 By that zone-encircled waist ;  
 15 By all the token-flowers that tell  
 What words can never speak so well ;  
 By love's alternate joy and woe,  
*Ζώη μου, σάς αγαπῶ.*

Maid of Athens ! I am gone :  
 20 Think of me, sweet ! when alone.  
 Though I fly to Istamboul,  
 Athens holds my heart and soul :  
 Can I cease to love thee ? No !  
*Ζώη μου, σάς αγαπῶ.*

as, Juvenal tells us, the two first words were amongst the Roman ladies, whose erotic expressions were all Hellenized."

15. "In the East (where ladies are not taught to write), flowers, cinders, pebbles, etc., convey the sentiments of the parties by that universal deputy of Mercury, — an old woman. A cinder says, 'I burn for thee;' a bunch of flowers tied with hair, 'Take me and fly;' but a pebble declares — what nothing else can." BYRON.

21. Istamboul = Constantinople. It is a corrupt form of *three Greek words*, signifying, "To the town."

## STANZAS TO AUGUSTA.

These stanzas were written at the Campagne Diodati, near Geneva, July 24, 1816, and transmitted to England for publication, with some other pieces. "Be careful," he says, "in printing the stanzas beginning 'Though the day of my destiny's,' etc., which I think well of as a composition." — Byron often erred in judging his own work, but in this case his judgment was right. It will be remembered that Poe, in his Essay on Poetry, particularly commends the sentiment and versification of this poem.

THOUGH the day of my destiny's over,  
 And the star of my fate hath declined,  
 Thy soft heart refused to discover  
 The faults which so many could find ;  
 5 Though thy soul with my grief was acquainted,  
 It shrunk not to share it with me,  
 And the love which my spirit hath painted  
 It never hath found but in *thee*.

Then when nature around me is smiling,  
 10 The last smile which answers to mine,  
 I do not believe it beguiling,  
 Because it reminds me of thine ;  
 And when winds are at war with the ocean,  
 As the breasts I believed in with me,  
 15 If their billows excite an emotion,  
 It is that they bear me from *thee*.

Though the rock of my last hope is shiver'd,  
 And its fragments are sunk in the wave,  
 Though I feel that my soul is deliver'd  
 20 To pain — it shall not be its slave.

There is many a pang to pursue me :

They may crush, but they shall not condemn —

They may torture, but shall not subdue me —

'T is of *thee* that I think — not of them.

25 Though human, thou didst not deceive me,

Though woman, thou didst not forsake,

Though loved, thou forborest to grieve me,

Though slander'd, thou never couldst shake, —

Though trusted, thou didst not disclaim me,

30 Though parted, it was not to fly,

Though watchful, 't was not to defame me,

Nor mute, that the world might belie.

Yet I blame not the world, nor despise it,

Nor the war of the many with one —

35 If my soul was not fitted to prize it,

'T was folly not sooner to shun :

And if dearly that error hath cost me,

And more than I once could foresee,

I have found that, whatever it lost me,

40 It could not deprive me of *thee*.

From the wreck of the past, which hath perish'd,

Thus much I at least may recall,

It hath taught me that what I most cherish'd

Deserved to be dearest of all :

45 In the desert a fountain is springing,

In the wide waste there still is a tree,

And a bird in the solitude singing,

Which speaks to my spirit of *thee*.

## EPISTLE TO AUGUSTA.

These stanzas were also written at Diodati. "There is," says Byron, "amongst the manuscripts an Epistle to my Sister, on which I should wish her opinion to be consulted before publication; if she objects, of course omit it." On the 5th of October he writes: "My sister has decided on the omission of the lines. Upon this point, her option will be followed. As I have no copy of them, I request that you will preserve one for me in MS.; for I never can remember a line of that nor any other composition of mine. God help me! if I proceed in this scribbling, I shall have frittered away my mind before I am thirty; but poetry is at times a real relief to me. To-morrow I am for Italy." The Epistle was first given to the world in 1830.

MY sister! my sweet sister! if a name  
 Dearer and purer were, it should be thine.  
 Mountains and seas divide us, but I claim  
 No tears, but tenderness to answer mine:  
 8 Go where I will, to me thou art the same —  
 A loved regret which I would not resign.  
 There yet are two things in my destiny, —  
 A world to roam through, and a home with thee.

The first were nothing — had I still the last,  
 10 It were the haven of my happiness;  
 But other claims and other ties thou hast,  
 And mine is not the wish to make them less.  
 A strange doom is thy father's son's, and past  
 Recalling, as it lies beyond redress;  
 15 Reversed for him our grandsire's fate of yore, —  
 He had no rest at sea, nor I on shore.

15. Byron's grandsire was an admiral in the British navy, and never made a voyage, it was said, without encountering a tempest. He was known to the sailors by the facetious name of "Foul weather Jack."

If my inheritance of storms hath been  
 In other elements, and on the rocks  
 Of perils, overlook'd or unforeseen,  
 20 I have sustain'd my share of worldly shocks,  
 The fault was mine ; nor do I seek to screen  
 My errors with defensive paradox ;  
 I have been cunning in mine overthrow,  
 The careful pilot of my proper woe.

25 Mine were my faults, and mine be their reward.  
 My whole life was a contest, since the day  
 That gave me being, gave me that which marr'd  
 The gift, — a fate, or will, that walk'd astray ;  
 And I at times have found the struggle hard,  
 30 And thought of shaking off my bonds of clay :  
 But now I fain would for a time survive,  
 If but to see what next can well arrive.

Kingdoms and empires in my little day  
 I have outlived, and yet I am not old ;  
 35 And when I look on this, the petty spray  
 Of my own years of trouble, which have roll'd  
 Like a wild bay of breakers, melts away :  
 Something — I know not what — does still uphold  
 A spirit of slight patience ; — not in vain,  
 40 Even for its own sake, do we purchase pain.

Perhaps the workings of defiance stir  
 Within me, — or perhaps a cold despair,  
 Brought on when ills habitually recur,  
 Perhaps a kinder clime, or purer air,  
 45 (For even to this may change of soul refer,  
 And with light armor we may learn to bear,)  
*Have taught me a strange quiet, which was not*  
*The chief companion of a calmer lot.*

I feel almost at times as I have felt  
 50 In happy childhood ; trees, and flowers, and brooks,  
 Which do remember me of where I dwelt  
 Ere my young mind was sacrificed to books,  
 Come as of yore upon me, and can melt  
 My heart with recognition of their looks ;  
 55 And even at moments I could think I see  
 Some living thing to love — but none like thee.

Here are the Alpine landscapes which create  
 A fund for contemplation ; — to admire  
 Is a brief feeling of a trivial date ;  
 60 But something worthier do such scenes inspire :  
 Here to be lonely is not desolate,  
 For much I view which I could most desire,  
 And, above all, a lake I can behold  
 Lovelier, not dearer, than our own of old.

65 Oh ! that thou wert but with me ! — but I grow  
 The fool of my own wishes, and forget  
 The solitude, which I have vaunted so,  
 Has lost its praise in this but one regret ;  
 There may be others which I less may show ; —  
 70 I am not of the plaintive mood, and yet  
 I feel an ebb in my philosophy,  
 And the tide rising in my alter'd eye.

I did remind thee of our own dear Lake,  
 By the old Hall which may be mine no more.  
 75 Leman's is fair ; but think not I forsake  
 The sweet remembrance of a dearer shore ;  
 Sad havoc Time must with my memory make  
 Ere *that* or *thou* can fade these eyes before ;  
 Though, like all things which I have loved, they are  
 80 Resign'd forever, or divided far.

The world is all before me ; I but ask  
Of Nature that with which she will comply —  
It is but in her summer's sun to bask,  
To mingle with the quiet of her sky,  
85 To see her gentle face without a mask,  
And never gaze on it with apathy.  
She was my early friend, and now shall be  
My sister — till I look again on thee.

I can reduce all feelings but this one,  
90 And that I would not ; — for at length I see  
Such scenes as those wherein my life begun,  
The earliest — even the only paths for me :  
Had I but sooner learn'd the crowd to shun,  
I had been better than I now can be ;  
95 The passions which have torn me would have slept ;  
*I had not suffer'd, and thou hadst not wept.*

With false Ambition what had I to do ?  
Little with Love, and least of all with Fame ;  
And yet they came unsought, and with me grew,  
100 And made me all which they can make — a name.  
Yet this was not the end I did pursue ;  
Surely I once beheld a nobler aim.  
But all is over — I am one the more  
To baffled millions which have gone before.

105 And for the future, this world's future may  
From me demand but little of my care ;  
I have outlived myself by many a day ;  
Having survived so many things that were ;  
My years have been no slumber, but the prey  
110 Of ceaseless vigils ; for I had the share  
*Of life which might have fill'd a century,*  
*Before its fourth in time had pass'd me by.*



And for the remnant which may be to come,  
 I am content; and for the past I feel  
 115 Not thankless, — for within the crowded sum  
 Of struggles, happiness at times would steal;  
 And for the present, I would not benumb  
 My feelings farther. — Nor shall I conceal  
 That with all this I still can look around,  
 120 And worship Nature with a thought profound.

For thee, my own sweet sister, in thy heart  
 I know myself secure, as thou in mine;  
 We were and are — I am, even as thou art —  
 Beings who ne'er each other can resign;  
 125 It is the same, together or apart,  
 From life's commencement to its slow decline  
 We are entwined — let death come slow or fast,  
 The tie which bound the first endures the last!

## WHEN WE TWO PARTED.

WHEN we two parted  
 In silence and tears,  
 Half broken-hearted  
 To sever for years,  
 5 Pale grew thy cheek and cold,  
 Colder thy kiss;  
 Truly that hour foretold  
 Sorrow to this.

The dew of the morning  
 10 Sunk chill on my brow —  
 It felt like the warning  
 Of what I feel now.

Thy vows are all broken,  
 And light is thy fame ;  
 15 I hear thy name spoken,  
 And share in its shame.

They name thee before me,  
 A knell to mine ear ;  
 A shudder comes o'er me —  
 20 Why wert thou so dear ?  
 They know not I knew thee,  
 Who knew thee too well : —  
 Long, long shall I rue thee,  
 Too deeply to tell.

25 In secret we met —  
 In silence I grieve  
 That thy heart could forget,  
 Thy spirit deceive.  
 If I should meet thee  
 30 After long years,  
 How should I greet thee ? —  
 With silence and tears.

### STANZAS FOR MUSIC.

These verses were given by Lord Byron to Mr. Power, of the Strand, who published them, with music by Sir John Stevenson. In a letter of March, 1816, Byron writes:—

“Do you remember the lines I sent you early last year? I don't wish (like Mr. Fitzgerald) to claim the character of ‘Vates,’ in all its translations, — but were they not a little prophetic? I mean those beginning, ‘There's not a joy the world can give,’ etc., on which I pique myself as being the *truest*, though the most *melancholy*, I ever wrote.” The occasion of the verses was the *death of a friend of the poet's*.

## I.

THERE 's not a joy the world can give like that it  
takes away,  
When the glow of early thought declines in feeling's  
dull decay ;  
'T is not on youth's smooth cheek the blush alone,  
which fades so fast,  
But the tender bloom of heart is gone ere youth it-  
self be past.

5 Then the few whose spirits float above the wreck of  
happiness  
Are driven o'er the shoals of guilt or ocean of ex-  
cess :  
The magnet of their course is gone, or only points  
in vain  
The shore to which their shiver'd sail shall never  
stretch again.

Then the mortal coldness of the soul like death it-  
self comes down ;  
10 It cannot feel for others' woes, it dare not dream its  
own ;  
That heavy chill has frozen o'er the fountain of our  
tears,  
And though the eye may sparkle still, 't is where  
the ice appears.

Though wit may flash from fluent lips, and mirth  
distract the breast,  
Through midnight hours that yield no more their  
former hope of rest ;

15 'Tis but as ivy-leaves around the ruin'd turret  
wreath,  
All green and wildly fresh without, but worn and  
grey beneath.

Oh could I feel as I have felt, — or be what I have  
been,  
Or weep as I could once have wept, o'er many a  
vanish'd scene ;  
As springs in deserts found seem sweet, all brackish  
though they be,  
20 So midst the wither'd waste of life, those tears  
would flow to me.

## II.

THERE be none of Beauty's daughters  
With a magic like thee ;  
And like music on the waters  
Is thy sweet voice to me :  
5 When, as if its sound were causing  
The charmèd ocean's pausing,  
The waves lie still and gleaming,  
And the lull'd winds seem dreaming.

And the midnight moon is weaving  
10 Her bright chain o'er the deep ;  
Whose breast is gently heaving,  
As an infant's asleep :  
So the spirit bows before thee,  
To listen and adore thee ;  
15 With a full but soft emotion,  
Like the swell of Summer's ocean.

## III.

BRIGHT be the place of thy soul !  
 No lovelier spirit than thine  
 E'er burst from its mortal control,  
 In the orbs of the blessed to shine.  
 5 On earth thou wert all but divine,  
 As thy soul shall immortally be ;  
 And our sorrow may cease to repine  
 When we know that thy God is with thee.

Light be the turf of thy tomb !  
 10 May its verdure like emeralds be !  
 There should not be the shadow of gloom,  
 In aught that reminds us of thee.  
 Young flowers and an evergreen tree  
 May spring from the spot of thy rest :  
 15 But nor cypress nor yew let us see ;  
 For why should we mourn for the blest ?

## IV.

THEY say that Hope is happiness ;  
 But genuine Love must prize the past,  
 And Memory wakes the thoughts that bless :  
 They rose the first — they set the last ;  
 5 And all that Memory loves the most  
 Was once our only Hope to be,  
 And all that Hope adored and lost  
 Hath melted into Memory.

Alas ! it is delusion all :  
 10 The future cheats us from afar,  
 Nor can we be what we recall,  
 Nor dare we think on what we are.

## THE DREAM.

This poem, called in the first draught "The Destiny," was written at Diodati, in July, 1816, and was occasioned by the separation which had come about between the poet and Lady Byron. His reflection on his misery led him to recall an earlier passion for a lady whose own marriage had also proved unhappy.

## I.

OUR life is twofold : Sleep hath its own world,  
 A boundary between the things misnamed  
 Death and existence : Sleep hath its own world,  
 And a wide realm of wild reality,  
 5 And dreams in their development have breath,  
 And tears, and tortures, and the touch of joy ;  
 They leave a weight upon our waking thoughts,  
 They take a weight from off our waking toils,  
 They do divide our being ; they become  
 10 A portion of ourselves as of our time,  
 And look like heralds of eternity ;  
 They pass like spirits of the past, — they speak  
 Like sibyls of the future ; they have power —  
 The tyranny of pleasure and of pain ;  
 15 They make us what we were not — what they will,  
 And shake us with the vision that's gone by,  
 The dread of vanish'd shadows — Are they so ?  
 Is not the past all shadow ? What are they ?  
 Creations of the mind ? — The mind can make  
 20 Substance, and people planets of its own  
 With beings brighter than have been, and give  
 A breath to forms which can outlive all flesh.  
 I would recall a vision which I dream'd  
 Perchance in sleep — for in itself a thought,  
 25 *A slumbering thought, is capable of years,*  
*And curdles a long life into one hour.*

## II.

I saw two beings in the hues of youth  
Standing upon a hill, a gentle hill,  
Green and of mild declivity, the last  
30 As 't were the cape of a long ridge of such,  
Save that there was no sea to lave its base,  
But a most living landscape, and the wave  
Of woods and cornfields, and the abodes of men  
Scatter'd at intervals, and wreathing smoke  
35 Arising from such rustic roofs ; — the hill  
Was crown'd with a peculiar diadem  
Of trees, in circular array, so fix'd,  
Not by the sport of nature, but of man :  
These two, a maiden and a youth, were there  
40 Gazing — the one on all that was beneath  
Fair as herself — but the boy gazed on her ;  
And both were young, and one was beautiful :  
And both were young — yet not alike in youth.  
As the sweet moon on the horizon's verge,  
45 The maid was on the eve of womanhood ;  
The boy had fewer summers, but his heart  
Had far outgrown his years, and to his eye  
There was but one beloved face on earth,  
And that was shining on him ; he had look'd  
50 Upon it till it could not pass away ;  
He had no breath, no being, but in hers :  
She was his voice ; he did not speak to her,  
But trembled on her words : she was his sight,  
For his eye follow'd hers, and saw with hers,  
55 Which colour'd all his objects : — he had ceased  
To live within himself ; she was his life,  
The ocean to the river of his thoughts,  
Which terminated all : upon a tone,

- A touch of hers, his blood would ebb and flow,  
 60 And his cheek change tempestuously — his heart  
 Unknowing of its cause of agony.  
 But she in those fond feelings had no share:  
 Her sighs were not for him ; to her he was  
 Even as a brother — but no more ; 't was much,  
 65 For brotherless she was, save in the name  
 Her infant friendship had bestow'd on him ;  
 Herself the solitary scion left  
 Of a time-honour'd race. — It was a name  
 Which pleased him, and yet pleased him not — and  
 why ?  
 70 Time taught him a deep answer — when she loved  
 Another ; even *now* she loved another,  
 And on the summit of that hill she stood  
 Looking afar if yet her lover's steed  
 Kept pace with her expectancy, and flew.

## III.

- 75 A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.  
 There was an ancient mansion, and before  
 Its walls there was a steed caparison'd :  
 Within an antique oratory stood  
 The Boy of whom I spake ; — he was alone,  
 80 And pale, and pacing to and fro : anon  
 He sate him down, and seized a pen, and traced  
 Words which I could not guess of ; then he lean'd  
 His bow'd head on his hands, and shook as 't were

68. "Our union," said Byron in 1821, "would have healed feuds in which blood had been shed by our fathers ; it would have joined lands, broad and rich ; it would have joined at least one heart and two persons not ill-matched in years (she is two years my elder) — and — and — and — what has been the result ?"



With a convulsion — then arose again,  
 85 And with his teeth and quivering hands did tear  
 What he had written, but he shed no tears.  
 And he did calm himself, and fix his brow  
 Into a kind of quiet: as he paused,  
 The Lady of his love re-enter'd there;  
 90 She was serene and smiling then, and yet  
 She knew she was by him beloved, — she knew,  
 For quickly comes such knowledge, that his heart  
 Was darken'd with her shadow, and she saw  
 That he was wretched, but she saw not all.  
 95 He rose, and with a cold and gentle grasp  
 He took her hand; a moment o'er his face  
 A tablet of unutterable thoughts  
 Was traced, and then it faded, as it came.  
 He dropp'd the hand he held, and with slow steps  
 100 Retired, but not as bidding her adieu,  
 For they did part with mutual smiles; he pass'd  
 From out the massy gate of that old Hall,  
 And mounting on his steed he went his way;  
 And ne'er repass'd that hoary threshold more.

## IV.

105 A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.  
 The Boy was sprung to manhood: in the wilds  
 Of fiery climes he made himself a home,  
 And his soul drank their sunbeams: he was girt  
 With strange and dusky aspects; he was not  
 110 Himself like what he had been; on the sea  
 And on the shore he was a wanderer;

94. "I had long been in love with M. A. C. and never told it, though *she* had discovered it without. I recollect my sensations, but cannot describe them, and it is as well." BYRON'S *Diary*, 1822.

There was a mass of many images  
Crowded like waves upon me, but he was  
A part of all; and in the last he lay  
115 Reposing from the noontide sultriness,  
Couch'd among fallen columns, in the shade  
Of ruin'd walls that had survived the names  
Of those who rear'd them; by his sleeping side  
Stood camels grazing, and some goodly steeds  
120 Were fasten'd near a fountain; and a man  
Clad in a flowing garb did watch the while,  
While many of his tribe slumber'd around:  
And they were canopied by the blue sky,  
So cloudless, clear, and purely beautiful,  
125 That God alone was to be seen in Heaven.

## V.

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.  
The Lady of his love was wed with One  
Who did not love her better: — in her home,  
A thousand leagues from his, — her native home,  
130 She dwelt, begirt with growing Infancy,  
Daughters and sons of Beauty, — but behold!  
Upon her face there was the tint of grief,  
The settled shadow of an inward strife,  
And an unquiet drooping of the eye,  
135 As if its lid were charged with unshed tears.  
What could her grief be? — she had all she loved,  
And he who had so loved her was not there  
To trouble with bad hopes, or evil wish,  
Or ill-repress'd affliction, her pure thoughts.  
140 What could her grief be? — she had loved him not,  
Nor given him cause to deem himself beloved,  
Nor could he be a part of that which prey'd  
Upon her mind — a spectre of the past.

## VI.

- A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.  
 145 The Wanderer was return'd. — I saw him stand  
 Before an Altar — with a gentle bride ;  
 Her face was fair, but was not that which made  
 The Starlight of his Boyhood ; — as he stood  
 Even at the altar, o'er his brow there came  
 150 The selfsame aspect, and the quivering shock  
 That in the antique oratory shook  
 His bosom in its solitude ; and then —  
 As in that hour — a moment o'er his face  
 The tablet of unutterable thoughts  
 155 Was traced — and then it faded as it came,  
 And he stood calm and quiet, and he spoke  
 The fitting vows, but heard not his own words,  
 And all things reel'd around him ; he could see  
 Not that which was, nor that which should have  
 been —  
 160 But the old mansion, and the accustom'd hall,  
 And the remember'd chambers, and the place,  
 The day, the hour, the sunshine, and the shade,  
 All things pertaining to that place and hour,  
 And her who was his destiny, came back  
 165 And thrust themselves between him and the light :  
 What business had they there at such a time ?

166. "This touching picture agrees closely, in many of its circumstances, with Lord Byron's own prose account of the wedding in his Memoranda; in which he describes himself as waking, on the morning of his marriage, with the most melancholy reflections, on seeing his wedding-suit spread out before him. In the same mood, he wandered about the grounds alone, till he was summoned for the ceremony, and joined, for the first time, on that day, his bride and her family. He knelt down — he repeated the words after the clergyman ; but a mist was

## VII.

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.  
 The Lady of his love ; — Oh ! she was changed,  
 As by the sickness of the soul ; her mind  
 170 Had wander'd from its dwelling, and her eyes,  
 They had not their own lustre, but the look  
 Which is not of the earth ; she was become  
 The queen of a fantastic realm ; her thoughts  
 Were combinations of disjointed things ;  
 175 And forms impalpable and unperceived  
 Of others' sight familiar were to hers.  
 And this the world calls frenzy ; but the wise  
 Have a far deeper madness, and the glance  
 Of melancholy is a fearful gift :  
 180 What is it but the telescope of truth,  
 Which strips the distance of its fantasies,  
 And brings life near in utter nakedness,  
 Making the cold reality too real ?

## VIII.

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.  
 185 The Wanderer was alone as heretofore,  
 The beings which surrounded him were gone,  
 Or were at war with him ; he was a mark  
 For blight and desolation, compass'd round  
 With Hatred and Contention ; Pain was mix'd  
 190 In all which was served up to him, until,  
 Like to the Pontic monarch of old days,  
 He fed on poisons, and they had no power,  
 But were a kind of nutriment ; he lived

before his eyes — his thoughts were elsewhere ; and he was but  
 awakened by the congratulations of the by-standers, to find that  
*he was — married.*" MOORE.

191. *Pontic monarch* = Mithridates.

Through that which had been death to many men,  
 195 And made him friends of mountains : with the stars  
 And the quick Spirit of the Universe  
 He held his dialogues ! and they did teach  
 To him the magic of their mysteries ;  
 To him the book of Night was open'd wide,  
 200 And voices from the deep abyss reveal'd  
 A marvel and a secret — Be it so.

## IX.

My dream was past ; it had no further change.  
 It was of a strange order, that the doom  
 Of these two creatures should be thus traced out  
 205 Almost like a reality — the one  
 To end in madness — both in misery.

## TO THOMAS MOORE.

Moore, the poet, was a close friend of Byron's and the editor of his Life. Indeed, Byron gave Moore during his lifetime an autobiography which never saw the light, for after being read by a few persons, the publisher Murray, who had paid Moore 2000 guineas for it, burned it in the presence of a small company, as unsuitable for publication. Moore repaid the sum advanced him. This poem and the one following were written after he, Byron, had left England for the last time.

MY boat is on the shore,  
 And my bark is on the sea ;  
 But, before I go, Tom Moore,  
 Here 's a double health to thee !  
 5 Here 's a sigh to those who love me,  
 And a smile to those who hate ;  
 And, whatever sky 's above me,  
 Here 's a heart for every fate.

Though the ocean roar around me,  
10 Yet it still shall bear me on ;  
Though a desert should surround me,  
It hath springs that may be won.

Were 't the last drop in the well,  
As I gasp'd upon the brink,  
15 Ere my fainting spirit fell,  
'T is to thee that I would drink.

With that water, as this wine,  
That libation I would pour  
Should be — peace with thine and mine,  
20 And health to thee, Tom Moore.

#### SO WE'LL GO NO MORE A ROVING.

So, we'll go no more a roving  
So late into the night,  
Though the heart be still as loving,  
And the moon be still as bright.

5 For the sword outwears its sheath,  
And the soul wears out the breast,  
And the heart must pause to breathe,  
And love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving,  
10 And the day returns too soon,  
Yet we'll go no more a roving  
By the light of the moon.

ON THE BUST OF HELEN BY CANOVA.

"The Helen of Canova (a bust which is in the house of Madame the Countess d'Albrizzi) is," says Byron, "without exception, to my mind, the most perfectly beautiful of human conception, and far beyond my ideas of human execution." Canova was the most eminent Italian sculptor of Byron's time. He died in Venice in 1822.

IN this beloved marble view,  
 Above the works and thoughts of man,  
 What nature *could*, but *would not*, do,  
 And beauty and Canova *can* !  
 Beyond imagination's power,  
 Beyond the Bard's defeated art,  
 With immortality her dower,  
 Behold the *Helen* of the heart !

## A VERY MOURNFUL BALLAD

## ON THE SIEGE AND CONQUEST OF ALHAMA

*Which, in the Arabic language, is to the following purport.*

A translation from the Spanish. "The effect," says Byron, "of the original ballad — which existed both in Spanish and Arabic — was such, that it was forbidden to be sung by the Moors, on pain of death, within Granada." The historical basis of the poem may be found in the sixth chapter of Washington Irving's *A Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada*.

**THE Moorish King rides up and down  
Through Granada's royal town ;  
From Elvira's gates to those  
Of Bivarambla on he goes.**

**Woe is me, Alhama!**





“Friends! ye have, alas! to know  
Of a most disastrous blow,  
That the Christians, stern and bold,  
Have obtain’d Alhama’s hold.”

**Woe is me, Alhama!**

Out then spake old Alfaqui,  
With his beard so white to see,  
"Good King! thou art justly served,  
Good King! this thou hast deserved.

**Woe is me, Alhama!**

“By thee were slain, in evil hour,  
The Abencerrage, Granada's flower;  
And strangers were received by thee  
Of Cordova the Chivalry.

50                      Woe is me, Alhama!

“And for this, oh King! is sent  
On thee a double chastisement:  
Thee and thine, thy crown and realm,  
One last wreck shall overwhelm.

**55**                      Woe is me, Alhama!

**“He who holds no laws in awe,  
He must perish by the law ;  
And Granada must be won,  
And thyself with her undone.”**

Woe is me, Alhama !

Fire flash'd from out the old Moor's eyes,  
The Monarch's wrath began to rise,  
Because he answer'd, and because  
He spake exceeding well of laws.

65 Woe is me, Alhama!

"There is no law to say such things  
As may disgust the ear of kings : " —  
Thus, snorting with his choler, said  
The Moorish King, and doom'd him dead.

70

Woe is me, Alhama !

Moor Alfaqui ! Moor Alfaqui !  
Though thy beard so hoary be,  
The King hath sent to have thee seized,  
For Alhama's loss displeased.

75

Woe is me, Alhama !

And to fix thy head upon  
High Alhambra's loftiest stone ;  
That this for thee should be the law,  
And others tremble when they saw.

80

Woe is me, Alhama !

"Cavalier, and man of worth !  
Let these words of mine go forth ;  
Let the Moorish Monarch know,  
That to him I nothing owe.

85

Woe is me, Alhama !

"But on my soul Alhama weighs,  
And on my inmost spirit preys ;  
And if the King his land hath lost,  
Yet others may have lost the most.

90

Woe is me, Alhama !

"Sires have lost their children, wives  
Their lords, and valiant men their lives ;  
One what best his love might claim  
*Hath lost, another wealth, or fame.*

95

Woe is me, Alhama !

"I lost a damsel in that hour,  
Of all the land the loveliest flower ;  
Doubloons a hundred I would pay,  
And think her ransom cheap that day."

100

Woe is me, Alhama !

And as these things the old Moor said,  
They sever'd from the trunk his head ;  
And to the Alhambra's wall with speed  
'T was carried, as the King decreed.

106

Woe is me, Alhama !

And men and infants therein weep  
Their loss, so heavy and so deep :  
Granada's ladies, all she rears  
Within her walls, burst into tears.

110

Woe is me, Alhama !

And from the windows o'er the walls  
The sable web of mourning falls ;  
The King weeps as a woman o'er  
His loss, for it is much and sore.

115

Woe is me, Alhama !

## STANZAS.

A friend of Lord Byron's, who was with him at Ravenna when he wrote these Stanzas, says: "They were composed, like many others, with no view of publication, but merely to relieve himself in a moment of suffering. He had been painfully excited by some circumstances which appeared to make it necessary that he should immediately quit Italy ; and in the day and the hour that he wrote the song was laboring under an access of fever."

COULD Love for ever  
Run like a river,  
And Time's endeavour  
Be tried in vain —  
5 No other pleasure  
With this could measure,  
And like a treasure  
We'd hug the chain.  
But since our sighing  
10 Ends not in dying,  
And, form'd for flying,  
Love plumes his wing ;  
Then for this reason  
Let's love a season ;  
15 But let that season be only Spring.

When lovers parted  
Feel broken-hearted,  
And, all hopes thwarted,  
Expect to die ;  
20 A few years older,  
Ah ! how much colder  
They might behold her  
For whom they sigh !  
When link'd together,  
25 In every weather,  
They pluck Love's feather  
From out his wing —  
He'll stay for ever,  
But sadly shiver  
30 Without his plumage, when past the Spring.

Like Chiefs of Faction,  
*His life is action —*

A formal paction  
That curbs his reign,  
35 Obscures his glory,  
Despot no more, he  
Such territory  
Quits with disdain.  
Still, still advancing,  
40 With banners glancing,  
His power enhancing,  
He must move on —  
Repose but cloy's him,  
Retreat destroys him,  
45 Love brooks not a degraded throne.

Wait not, fond lover !  
Till years are over,  
And then recover,  
As from a dream.  
50 While each bewailing  
The other's failing,  
With wrath and railing,  
All hideous seem —  
While first decreasing,  
55 Yet not quite ceasing,  
Wait not till teasing  
All passion blight :  
If once diminish'd  
Love's reign is finish'd —  
60 Then part in friendship, — and bid good-night.

So shall Affection  
To recollection  
The dear connexion  
Bring back with joy :

65 You had not waited  
 Till, tired or hated,  
 Your passions sated  
     Began to cloy.  
 Your last embraces  
 70 Leave no cold traces —  
 The same fond faces  
     As through the past ;  
 And eyes, the mirrors  
 Of your sweet errors,  
 75 Reflect but rapture — not least though last.

True, separations  
 Ask more than patience ;  
 What desperations  
     From such have risen !  
 80 But yet remaining,  
 What is 't but chaining  
 Hearts which, once waning,  
     Beat 'gainst their prison ?  
 Time can but cloy love,  
 85 And use destroy love :  
 The winged boy, Love,  
     Is but for boys —  
 You 'll find it torture  
 Though sharper, shorter,  
 90 To wean, and not wear out your joys.

### DARKNESS.

Jeffrey remarks on this poem, which originally was called "A Dream," it "is a grand and gloomy sketch of the supposed consequences of the final extinction of the sun and the heavenly *bodies*; executed, undoubtedly, with great and fearful force, but

with something of German exaggeration, and a fantastical solution of incidents. The very conception is terrible above all conception of known calamity, and is too oppressive to the imagination to be contemplated with pleasure, even in the faint reflection of poetry."

- I HAD a dream, which was not all a dream.  
 The bright sun was extinguish'd, and the stars  
 Did wander darkling in the eternal space,  
 Rayless, and pathless, and the icy earth  
 5 Swung blind and blackening in the moonless air.  
 Morn came and went — and came, and brought no  
 day,  
 And men forgot their passions in the dread  
 Of this their desolation ; and all hearts  
 Were chill'd into a selfish prayer for light.  
 10 And they did live by watchfires — and the thrones,  
 The palaces of crownèd kings — the huts,  
 The habitations of all things which dwell,  
 Were burnt for beacons ; cities were consumed,  
 And men were gather'd round their blazing homes  
 15 To look once more into each other's face :  
 Happy were those who dwelt within the eye  
 Of the volcanoes and their mountain-torch.  
 A fearful hope was all the world contain'd ;  
 Forests were set on fire — but hour by hour  
 20 They fell and faded — and the crackling trunks  
 Extinguish'd with a crash — and all was black.  
 The brows of men by the despairing light  
 Wore an unearthly aspect, as by fits  
 The flashes fell upon them ; some lay down  
 25 And hid their eyes and wept ; and some did rest  
 Their chins upon their clenched hands, and smiled ;  
 And others hurried to and fro, and fed  
 Their funeral piles with fuel, and look'd up

- With mad disquietude on the dull sky,  
30 The pall of a past world ; and then again  
With curses cast them down upon the dust,  
And gnash'd their teeth and howl'd. The wild  
birds shriek'd,  
And, terrified, did flutter on the ground,  
And flap their useless wings ; the wildest brutes  
35 Came tame and tremulous ; and vipers crawl'd  
And twined themselves among the multitude,  
Hissing, but stingless — they were slain for food.  
And War, which for a moment was no more,  
Did glut himself again ; — a meal was bought  
40 With blood, and each sate sullenly apart  
Gorging himself in gloom : no love was left ;  
All earth was but one thought — and that was  
death,  
Immediate and inglorious ; and the pang  
Of famine fed upon all entrails — men  
45 Died, and their bones were tombless as their flesh.  
The meagre by the meagre were devour'd :  
Even dogs assail'd their masters, all save one,  
And he was faithful to a corse, and kept  
The birds and beasts and famish'd men at bay,  
50 Till hunger clung them, or the dropping dead  
Lured their lank jaws ; himself sought out no food,  
But with a piteous and perpetual moan,  
And a quick desolate cry, licking the hand  
Which answer'd not with a caress — he died.  
55 The crowd was famish'd by degrees ; but two  
Of an enormous city did survive,  
And they were enemies : they met beside  
The dying embers of an altar-place  
Where had been heap'd a mass of holy things  
60 *For an unholy usage ; they raked up,*



And shivering scraped with their cold skeleton  
hands  
The feeble ashes, and their feeble breath  
Blew for a little life, and made a flame  
Which was a mockery ; then they lifted up  
65 Their eyes as it grew lighter, and beheld  
Each other's aspects — saw, and shriek'd, and  
died —  
Even of their mutual hideousness they died,  
Unknowing who he was upon whose brow  
Famine had written Fiend. The world was void,  
70 The populous and the powerful was a lump,  
Seasonless, herbless, treeless, manless, lifeless —  
A lump of death — a chaos of hard clay.  
The rivers, lakes, and ocean all stood still,  
And nothing stirr'd within their silent depths ;  
75 Ships sailorless lay rotting on the sea,  
And their masts fell down piecemeal ; as they  
dropp'd,  
They slept on the abyss without a surge —  
The waves were dead ; the tides were in their grave,  
The Moon, their mistress, had expired before ;  
80 The winds were wither'd in the stagnant air,  
And the clouds perish'd ; Darkness had no need  
Of aid from them — She was the Universe.

## PROMETHEUS.

The story of the Titan Prometheus, or Forethought, has been a favorite subject for poets both in ancient and modern times. The myth relates how Prometheus was the creator of man, and ascended to heaven, lighted his torch at the chariot of the sun, and brought the fire down for the use of man. For this, the Olympian Zeus chained him to a rock on Mount Caucasus, where he was to be forever exposed to the attack of a vulture. The

great tragedy of *Prometheus Bound* by Æschylus has been translated by Augusta Webster, Plumptre, Mrs. Browning, and others. Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* was based on it, and besides Byron, Longfellow and Lowell have taken Prometheus for the subject of poems.

## I.

TITAN! to whose immortal eyes  
The sufferings of mortality,  
Seen in their sad reality,  
Were not as things that gods despise;  
6 What was thy pity's recompense?  
A silent suffering, and intense;  
The rock, the vulture, and the chain,  
All that the proud can feel of pain,  
The agony they do not show,  
10 The suffocating sense of woe,  
Which speaks but in its loneliness,  
And then is jealous lest the sky  
Should have a listener, nor will sigh  
Until its voice is echoless.

## II.

15 Titan! to thee the strife was given  
Between the suffering and the will,  
Which torture where they cannot kill;  
And the inexorable Heaven,  
And the deaf tyranny of Fate,  
20 The ruling principle of Hate,  
Which for its pleasure doth create  
The things it may annihilate,  
Refused thee even the boon to die:  
The wretched gift eternity  
25 Was thine — and thou hast borne it well.  
All that the Thunderer wrung from thee

Was but the menace which flung back  
On him the torments of thy rack ;  
The fate thou didst so well foresee,  
30 But would not to appease him tell ;  
And in thy Silence was his Sentence,  
And in his Soul a vain repentance,  
And evil dread so ill dissembled,  
That in his hand the lightnings trembled.

## III.

35 Thy Godlike crime was to be kind,  
To render with thy precept less  
The sum of human wretchedness,  
And strengthen Man with his own mind ;  
But baffled as thou wert from high,  
40 Still in thy patient energy,  
In the endurance, and repulse  
Of thine impenetrable Spirit,  
Which Earth and Heaven could not convulse,  
A mighty lesson we inherit :  
45 Thou art a symbol and a sign  
To Mortals of their fate and force ;  
Like thee, Man is in part divine,  
A troubled stream from a pure source ;  
And Man in portions can foresee  
50 His own funereal destiny,  
His wretchedness, and his resistance,  
And his sad unallied existence :  
To which his Spirit may oppose  
Itself — and equal to all woes,  
55 And a firm will, and a deep sense,  
Which even in torture can descry  
Its own concenter'd recompense,  
Triumphant where it dares defy,  
And making Death a Victory.

## STANZAS

WRITTEN ON THE ROAD BETWEEN FLORENCE AND  
PISA.

Written in November, 1821.

OH, talk not to me of a name great in story ;  
The days of our youth are the days of our glory ;  
And the myrtle and ivy of sweet two-and-twenty  
Are worth all your laurels, though ever so plenty.

5 What are garlands and crowns to the brow that is  
wrinkled ?

'T is but as a dead flower with May-dew besprinkled.  
Then away with all such from the head that is  
hoary !

What care I for the wreaths that can *only* give  
glory ?

Oh FAME ! — if I e'er took delight in thy praises,  
10 'T was less for the sake of thy high sounding phrases,  
Than to see the bright eyes of the dear one discover  
She thought that I was not unworthy to love her.

*There* chiefly I sought thee, *there* only I found thee ;  
Her glance was the best of the rays that surround  
thee ;

15 When it sparkled o'er aught that was bright in my  
story,

I knew it was love, and I felt it was glory.

ON THIS DAY I COMPLETE MY THIRTY-  
SIXTH YEAR.

Missolonghi, January 22, 1824.

These verses were written apparently at the time when Byron received his commission from the Greek government as commander of the expedition against Lepanto, with full powers, both civil and military.

'T is time this heart should be unmoved,  
Since others it hath ceased to move :  
Yet, though I cannot be beloved,  
Still let me love !

5 My days are in the yellow leaf ;  
The flowers and fruits of love are gone ;  
The worm, the canker, and the grief  
Are mine alone !

The fire that on my bosom preys  
10 Is lone as some volcanic isle ;  
No torch is kindled at its blaze —  
A funeral pile.

The hope, the fear, the jealous care,  
The exalted portion of the pain  
15 And power of love, I cannot share,  
But wear the chain.

But 't is not *thus* — and 't is not *here* —  
Such thoughts should shake my soul, nor *now*,  
Where glory decks the hero's bier,  
20 Or binds his brow.

The sword, the banner, and the field,  
 Glory and Greece, around me see!  
 The Spartan, borne upon his shield,  
 Was not more free.

25 Awake! (not Greece — she *is* awake!)  
 Awake, my spirit! Think through *whom*  
 Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake,  
 And then strike home!

Tread those reviving passions down,  
 30 Unworthy manhood! — unto thee  
 Indifferent should the smile or frown  
 Of beauty be.

If thou regret'st thy youth, *why live?*  
 The land of honourable death  
 35 Is here: — up to the field, and give  
 Away thy breath!

Seek out — less often sought than found —  
 A soldier's grave, for thee the best;  
 Then look around, and choose thy ground,  
 40 And take thy rest.

### MAZEPPA.

This poem was written at Venice and Ravenna in the autumn of 1818. Byron drew his story from an incident related by Voltaire in his *History of Charles XII.*, which is as follows:—

The Ukraine (the country of the Cossacks) has always aspired to liberty; but being surrounded by Muscovy, the dominions of the Grand Seignior, and Poland, it has been obliged to choose a protector, and, consequently, a master, in one of these *three States*. The Ukrainians at first put themselves under the

protection of the Poles, who treated them with great severity. They afterwards submitted to the Russians, who governed them with despotic sway. They had originally the privilege of electing a prince under the name of general ; but they were soon deprived of that right, and their general was nominated by the court of Moscow.

The person who then filled that station was a Polish gentleman, named Mazeppa, and born in the palatinate of Podolia. He had been brought up as a page to John Casimir, and had received some tincture of learning in his court. An intrigue which he had had in his youth with the lady of a Polish gentleman, having been discovered, the husband caused him to be bound stark naked upon a wild horse, and let him go in that condition. The horse, which had been brought out of Ukraine, returned to its own country, and carried Mazeppa along with it, half-dead with hunger and fatigue. Some of the country people gave him assistance ; and he lived among them for a long time, and signalized himself in several excursions against the Tartars. The superiority of his knowledge gained him great respect among the Cossacks ; and his reputation daily increasing, the czar found it necessary to make him prince of the Ukraine.

## I.

'T WAS after dread Pultowa's day,  
When fortune left the royal Swede,  
Around a slaughter'd army lay,  
No more to combat and to bleed.  
5 The power and glory of the war,  
Faithless as their vain votaries, men,  
Had pass'd to the triumphant Czar,  
And Moscow's walls were safe again,  
Until a day more dark and drear,  
10 And a more memorable year,  
Should give to slaughter and to shame  
A mightier host and haughtier name ;  
A greater wreck, a deeper fall,  
A shock to one — a thunderbolt to all.

## II.

- 15 Such was the hazard of the die ;  
The wounded Charles was taught to fly  
By day and night through field and flood,  
Stain'd with his own and subjects' blood ;  
For thousands fell that flight to aid :
- 20 And not a voice was heard t' upbraid  
Ambition in his humbled hour,  
When truth had naught to dread from power.  
His horse was slain, and Gieta gave  
His own — and died the Russians' slave.
- 25 This too sinks after many a league  
Of well-sustain'd, but vain fatigue ;  
And in the depth of forests darkling,  
The watch-fires in the distance sparkling —  
The beacons of surrounding foes —
- 30 A king must lay his limbs at length.  
Are these the laurels and repose  
For which the nations strain their strength ?  
They laid him by a savage tree,  
In outworn nature's agony ;
- 35 His wounds were stiff — his limbs were stark —  
The heavy hour was chill and dark ;  
The fever in his blood forbade  
A transient slumber's fitful aid :  
And thus it was ; but yet through all,
- 40 Kinglike the monarch bore his fall,  
And made, in this extreme of ill,  
His pangs the vassals of his will :  
All silent and subdued were they,  
As once the nations round him lay.



## III.

45 A band of chiefs! — alas! how few,  
Since but the fleeting of a day  
Had thinn'd it; but this wreck was true  
And chivalrous: upon the clay  
Each sate him down, all sad and mute,  
50 Beside his monarch and his steed,  
For danger levels man and brute,  
And all are fellows in their need.  
Among the rest, Mazeppa made  
His pillow in an old oak's shade —  
55 Himself as rough, and scarce less old,  
The Ukraine's hetman, calm and bold.  
But first, outspent with his long course,  
The Cossack prince rubb'd down his horse,  
And made for him a leafy bed,  
60 And smooth'd his fetlocks and his mane,  
And slack'd his girth, and stripp'd his rein,  
And joy'd to see how well he fed;  
For until now he had the dread  
His wearied courser might refuse  
65 To browse beneath the midnight dews:  
But he was hardy as his lord,  
And little cared for bed and board;  
But spirited and docile too;  
Whate'er was to be done, would do.  
70 Shaggy and swift, and strong of limb,  
All Tartar-like he carried him;  
Obey'd his voice, and came to call,  
And knew him in the midst of all:  
Though thousands were around, — and Night,  
75 Without a star, pursued her flight, —

56. *Hetman*, a Cossack chief.

That steed from sunset until dawn  
His chief would follow like a fawn.

## IV.

This done, Mazeppa spread his cloak,  
And laid his lance beneath his oak,  
80 Felt if his arms in order good  
The long day's march had well withstood —  
If still the powder fill'd the pan,  
And flints unloosen'd kept their lock —  
His sabre's hilt and scabbard felt,  
85 And whether they had chafed his belt —  
And next the venerable man,  
From out his haversack and can,  
Prepared and spread his slender stock ;  
And to the monarch and his men  
90 The whole or portion offer'd then  
With far less of inquietude  
Than courtiers at a banquet would.  
And Charles of this his slender share  
With smiles partook a moment there,  
95 To force of cheer a greater show,  
And seem above both wounds and woe ; —  
And then he said — “ Of all our band,  
Though firm of heart and strong of hand,  
In skirmish, march, or forage, none  
100 Can less have said or more have done  
Than thee, Mazeppa ! On the earth  
So fit a pain had never birth,  
Since Alexander's days till now,  
As thy Bucephalus and thou :  
105 All Scythia's fame to thine should yield  
For pricking on o'er flood and field.”  
Mazeppa answer'd — “ Ill betide

- The school wherein I learn'd to ride ! ”  
Quoth Charles — “ Old Hetman, wherefore so,  
110 Since thou hast learn'd the art so well ? ”  
Mazeppa said — “ 'T were long to tell ;  
And we have many a league to go,  
With every now and then a blow,  
And ten to one at least the foe,  
115 Before our steeds may graze at ease  
Beyond the swift Borysthenes ;  
And, sire, your limbs have need of rest,  
And I will be the sentinel  
Of this your troop.” — “ But I request,”  
120 Said Sweden's monarch, “ thou wilt tell  
This tale of thine, and I may reap,  
Perchance, from this the boon of sleep ;  
For at this moment from my eyes  
The hope of present slumber flies.”
- 125 “ Well, sire, with such a hope, I 'll track  
My seventy years of memory back :  
I think 't was in my twentieth spring, —  
Ay, 't was, — when Casimir was king —  
John Casimir, — I was his page  
130 Six summers, in my earlier age.  
A learned monarch, faith ! was he,  
And most unlike your majesty :  
He made no wars, and did not gain  
New realms to lose them back again ;  
135 And (save debates in Warsaw's diet)  
He reign'd in most unseemly quiet ;  
Not that he had no cares to vex,  
He loved the muses and the sex ;  
And sometimes these so froward are,  
140 They made him wish himself at war ;

But soon his wrath being o'er, he took  
Another mistress, or new book.  
And then he gave prodigious fêtes —  
All Warsaw gather'd round his gates  
145 To gaze upon his splendid court,  
And dames, and chiefs, of princely port :  
He was the Polish Solomon,  
So sung his poets, all but one,  
Who, being unpension'd, made a satire,  
150 And boasted that he could not flatter.  
It was a court of jousts and mimes,  
Where every courtier tried at rhymes ;  
Even I for once produced some verses,  
And sign'd my odes ' Despairing Thyrsis.'  
155 There was a certain Palatine,  
A count of far and high descent,  
Rich as a salt or silver mine ;  
And he was proud, ye may divine,  
As if from heaven he had been sent.  
160 He had such wealth in blood and ore  
As few could match beneath the throne ;  
And he would gaze upon his store,  
And o'er his pedigree would pore,  
Until by some confusion led,  
165 Which almost look'd like want of head,  
He thought their merits were his own.  
His wife was not of his opinion —  
His junior she by thirty years —  
Grew daily tired of his dominion ;  
170 And, after wishes, hopes, and fears,  
To virtue a few farewell tears,  
A restless dream or two, some glances  
At Warsaw's youth, some songs, and dances,  
157. *In Poland the salt mines were a great source of wealth.*

Awaited but the usual chances,  
 275 (Those happy accidents which render  
 The coldest dames so very tender,)  
 To deck her Count with titles given,  
 'T is said, as passports into heaven ;  
 But, strange to say, they rarely boast  
 180 Of these, who have deserved them most.

## V.

" I was a goodly stripling then ;  
 At seventy years I so may say,  
 That there were few, or boys or men,  
 Who, in my dawning time of day,  
 185 Of vassal or of knight's degree,  
 Could vie in vanities with me ;  
 For I had strength, youth, gaiety,  
 A port, not like to this ye see,  
 But as smooth as all is rugged now ;  
 190 For time, and care, and war, have plough'd  
 My very soul from out my brow ;  
 And thus I should be disavow'd  
 By all my kind and kin, could they  
 Compare my day and yesterday.  
 195 This change was wrought, too, long ere age  
 Had ta'en my features for his page :  
 With years, ye know, have not declined  
 My strength, my courage, or my mind,  
 Or at this hour I should not be  
 200 Telling old tales beneath a tree,  
 With starless skies my canopy.  
 But let me on : Theresa's form —  
 Methinks it glides before me now,  
 Between me and yon chestnut's bough,  
 205 The memory is so quick and warm ;

And yet I find no words to tell  
The shape of her I loved so well.  
She had the Asiatic eye,  
Such as our Turkish neighbourhood,  
210 Hath mingled with our Polish blood,  
Dark as above us is the sky ;  
But through it stole a tender light,  
Like the first moonrise of midnight ;  
Large, dark, and swimming in the stream,  
215 Which seem'd to melt to its own beam ;  
All love, half languor, and half fire,  
Like saints that at the stake expire,  
And lift their raptured looks on high  
As though it were a joy to die ; —  
220 A brow like a midsummer lake,  
Transparent with the sun therein,  
When waves no murmur dare to make,  
And heaven beholds her face within ;  
A cheek and lip — but why proceed ?  
225 I loved her then — I love her still ;  
And such as I am, love indeed  
In fierce extremes — in good and ill ;  
But still we love even in our rage,  
And haunted to our very age  
230 With the vain shadow of the past,  
As is Mazeppa to the last.

## VI.

“ We met — we gazed — I saw, and sigh'd,  
She did not speak, and yet replied :  
There are ten thousand tones and signs  
235 We hear and see, but none defines —  
Involuntary sparks of thought,  
*Which strike from out the heart o'erwrought*

And form a strange intelligence  
Alike mysterious and intense,  
240 Which link the burning chain that binds,  
Without their will, young hearts and minds :  
Conveying, as the electric wire,  
We know not how, the absorbing fire. —  
I saw, and sigh'd — in silence wept,  
245 And still reluctant distance kept,  
Until I was made known to her,  
And we might then and there confer  
Without suspicion — then, even then,  
I long'd, and was resolved to speak ;  
250 But on my lips they died again,  
The accents tremulous and weak,  
Until one hour. — There is a game,  
A frivolous and foolish play,  
Wherewith we while away the day ;  
255 It is — I have forgot the name —  
And we to this, it seems, were set,  
By some strange chance, which I forget :  
I reckon'd not if I won or lost,  
It was enough for me to be  
260 So near to hear, and oh ! to see  
The being whom I loved the most.  
I watch'd her as a sentinel,  
(May ours this dark night watch as well !)  
Until I saw, and thus it was,  
265 That she was pensive, nor perceived  
Her occupation, nor was grieved  
Nor glad to lose or gain ; but still  
Play'd on for hours, as if her will  
Yet bound her to the place, though not  
270 That hers might be the winning lot.  
Then through my brain the thought did pass

Even as a flash of lightning there,  
That there was something in her air  
Which would not doom me to despair;  
275 And on the thought my words broke forth,  
All incoherent as they were —  
Their eloquence was little worth,  
But yet she listen'd — 't is enough —  
Who listens once will listen twice;  
280 Her heart, be sure, is not of ice,  
And one refusal no rebuff.

## VII.

“I loved, and was beloved again —  
They tell me, sire, you never knew  
Those gentle frailties; if 't is true,  
285 I shorten all my joy or pain;  
To you 't would seem absurd as vain;  
But all men are not born to reign,  
Or o'er their passions, or as you  
Thus o'er themselves and nations too.  
290 I am — or rather *was* — a prince,  
A chief of thousands, and could lead  
Them on where each would foremost bleed;  
But could not o'er myself evince  
The like control. — But to resume:  
295 I loved, and was beloved again;  
In sooth, it is a happy doom,  
But yet where happiest ends in pain. —  
We met in secret, and the hour  
Which led me to that lady's bower  
300 Was fiery Expectation's dower.  
My days and nights were nothing — all  
Except that hour which doth recall  
*In the long lapse from youth to age*



No other like itself — I'd give  
 305 The Ukraine back again to live  
 It o'er once more — and be a page,  
 The happy page, who was the lord  
 Of one soft heart and his own sword,  
 And had no other gem nor wealth  
 310 Save nature's gift of youth and health. —  
 We met in secret — doubly sweet,  
 Some say, they find it so to meet;  
 I know not that — I would have given  
 My life but to have call'd her mine  
 315 In the full view of earth and heaven;  
 For I did oft and long repine  
 That we could only meet by stealth.

## VIII.

“For lovers there are many eyes,  
 And such there were on us; — the devil  
 320 On such occasions should be civil —  
 The devil! — I'm loth to do him wrong,  
 It might be some untoward saint,  
 Who would not be at rest too long  
 But to his pious bile gave vent —  
 325 But one fair night, some lurking spies  
 Surprised and seized us both.  
 The Count was something more than wroth —  
 I was unarm'd; but if in steel,  
 All cap-à-pie from head to heel,  
 330 What 'gainst their numbers could I do? —  
 'T was near his castle, far away  
 From city or from succour near,  
 And almost on the break of day;  
 I did not think to see another,  
 335 My moments seem'd reduced to few;

And with one prayer to Mary Mother,  
 And, it may be, a saint or two,  
 As I resign'd me to my fate,  
 They led me to the castle gate :  
 340 Theresa's doom I never knew,  
 Our lot was henceforth separate —  
 An angry man, ye may opine,  
 Was he, the proud Count Palatine ;  
 And he had reason good to be,  
 345 But he was most enraged lest such  
 An accident should chance to touch  
 Upon his future pedigree ;  
 Nor less amazed, that such a blot  
 His noble 'scutcheon should have got,  
 350 While he was highest of his line ;  
 Because unto himself he seem'd  
 The first of men, nor less he deem'd  
 In others' eyes, and most in mine.  
 'Sdeath ! with a *page* — perchance a king  
 355 Had reconciled him to the thing ;  
 But with a stripling of a page —  
 I felt — but cannot paint his rage.

## IX.

“ ‘ Bring forth the horse ! ’ — the horse was brought ;  
 In truth, he was a noble steed,  
 360 A Tartar of the Ukraine breed,  
 Who look'd as though the speed of thought  
 Were in his limbs ; but he was wild,  
 Wild as the wild deer, and untaught,  
 With spur and bridle undefiled —  
 365 'T was but a day he had been caught ;  
 And *snorting*, with erected mane,  
 And *struggling* fiercely, but in vain,

In the full foam of wrath and dread  
 To me the desert-born was led.  
 370 They bound me on, that menial throng,  
 Upon his back with many a thong ;  
 They loosed him with a sudden lash —  
 Away ! — away ! — and on we dash ! —  
 Torrents less rapid and less rash.

## X.

375 “ Away ! — away ! — My breath was gone —  
 I saw not where he hurried on :  
 ’T was scarcely yet the break of day,  
 And on he foam’d — away ! — away ! —  
 The last of human sounds which rose,  
 380 As I was darted from my foes,  
 Was the wild shout of savage laughter,  
 Which on the wind came roaring after  
 A moment from that rabble rout :  
 With sudden wrath I wrench’d my head,  
 385 And snapp’d the cord, which to the mane  
 Had bound my neck in lieu of rein,  
 And writhing half my form about,  
 Howl’d back my curse ; but ’midst the tread,  
 The thunder of my courser’s speed,  
 390 Perchance they did not hear nor heed :  
 It vexes me — for I would fain  
 Have paid their insult back again.  
 I paid it well in after days :  
 There is not of that castle gate,  
 395 Its drawbridge and portcullis’ weight,  
 Stone, bar, moat, bridge, or barrier left ;  
 Nor of its fields a blade of grass,  
 Save what grows on a ridge of wall,  
 Where stood the hearth-stone of the hall ;

400 And many a time ye there might pass,  
Nor dream that e'er that fortress was :  
I saw its turrets in a blaze,  
Their crackling battlements all cleft,  
And the hot lead pour down like rain  
405 From off the scorch'd and blackening roof,  
Whose thickness was not vengeance-proof.  
They little thought that day of pain,  
When launch'd, as on the lightning's flash,  
They bade me to destruction dash,  
410 That one day I should come again,  
With twice five thousand horse, to thank  
The Count for his uncourteous ride.  
They play'd me then a bitter prank,  
When, with the wild horse for my guide,  
415 They bound me to his foaming flank :  
At length I play'd them one as frank —  
For time at last sets all things even —  
And if we do but watch the hour,  
There never yet was human power  
420 Which could evade, if unforgiven,  
The patient search and vigil long  
Of him who treasures up a wrong.

## XI.

“ Away, away, my steed and I,  
Upon the pinions of the wind.  
425 All human dwellings left behind ;  
We sped like meteors through the sky,  
When with its crackling sound the night  
Is chequer'd with the northern light.  
Town — village — none were on our track,  
430 But a wild plain of far extent,  
And bounded by a forest black ;  
And, save the scarce seen battlement

On distant heights of some strong hold,  
 Against the Tartars built of old,  
 435 No trace of man : the year before  
     A Turkish army had march'd o'er ;  
 And where the Spahi's hoof hath trod,  
 The verdure flies the bloody sod.  
 The sky was dull, and dim, and gray,  
 440 And a low breeze crept moaning by —  
     I could have answer'd with a sigh —  
 But fast we fled, away, away —  
 And I could neither sigh nor pray ;  
 And my cold sweat-drops fell like rain  
 445 Upon the courser's bristling mane ;  
 But, snorting still with rage and fear,  
 He flew upon his far career.  
 At times I almost thought, indeed,  
 He must have slacken'd in his speed ;  
 450 But no — my bound and slender frame  
     Was nothing to his angry might,  
 And merely like a spur became :  
 Each motion which I made to free  
 My swoln limbs from their agony  
 455 Increased his fury and affright :  
 I tried my voice, — 't was faint and low,  
 But yet he swerved as from a blow ;  
 And, starting to each accent, sprang  
 As from a sudden trumpet's clang.  
 460 Meantime my cords were wet with gore,  
 Which, oozing through my limbs, ran o'er ;  
 And in my tongue the thirst became  
 A something fierier far than flame.

## XII.

" We near'd the wild wood — 't was so wide,  
 465 I saw no bounds on either side ;

'T was studded with old sturdy trees,  
That bent not to the roughest breeze  
Which howls down from Siberia's waste  
And strips the forest in its haste, —  
470 But these were few and far between,  
Set thick with shrubs more young and green,  
Luxuriant with their annual leaves,  
Ere strown by those autumnal eves  
That nip the forest's foliage dead,  
475 Discolour'd with a lifeless red,  
Which stands thereon like stiffen'd gore  
Upon the slain when battle's o'er,  
And some long winter's night hath shed  
Its frost o'er every tombless head,  
480 So cold and stark the raven's beak  
May peck unpierced each frozen cheek.  
'T was a wild waste of underwood,  
And here and there a chestnut stood,  
The strong oak, and the hardy pine ;  
485 But far apart — and well it were,  
Or else a different lot were mine —  
The boughs gave way, and did not tear  
My limbs ; and I found strength to bear  
My wounds already scarr'd with cold —  
490 My bonds forbade to loose my hold.  
We rustled through the leaves like wind,  
Left shrubs, and trees, and wolves behind ;  
By night I heard them on the track,  
Their troop came hard upon our back,  
495 With their long gallop which can tire  
The hound's deep hate and hunter's fire :  
Where'er we flew they follow'd on,  
Nor left us with the morning sun ;  
*Behind I saw them, scarce a rood,*

500 At day-break winding through the wood,  
And through the night had heard their feet  
Their stealing, rustling step repeat.  
Oh! how I wish'd for spear or sword,  
At least to die amidst the horde,  
505 And perish — if it must be so —  
At bay, destroying many a foe.  
When first my courser's race begun,  
I wish'd the goal already won;  
But now I doubted strength and speed.  
510 Vain doubt! his swift and savage breed  
Had nerved him like the mountain-roe;  
Nor faster falls the blinding snow  
Which whelms the peasant near the door  
Whose threshold he shall cross no more,  
515 Bewilder'd with the dazzling blast,  
Than through the forest-paths he past —  
Untired, untamed, and worse than wild;  
All furious as a favour'd child  
Balk'd of its wish; or fiercer still —  
520 A woman piqued — who has her will.

## XIII.

“The wood was past; 't was more than noon,  
But chill the air although in June;  
Or it might be my veins ran cold —  
Prolong'd endurance tames the bold;  
525 And I was then not what I seem,  
But headlong as a wintry stream,  
And wore my feelings out before  
I well could count their causes o'er.  
And what with fury, fear, and wrath,  
530 The tortures which beset my path,  
Cold, hunger, sorrow, shame, distress,

Thus bound in nature's nakedness,  
(Sprung from a race whose rising blood  
When stirr'd beyond its calmer mood,  
535 And trodden hard upon, is like  
The rattle-snake's in act to strike,)  
What marvel if this worn-out trunk  
Beneath its woes a moment sunk ?  
The earth gave way, the skies roll'd round,  
540 I seem'd to sink upon the ground ;  
But err'd, for I was fastly bound.  
My heart turn'd sick, my brain grew sore,  
And throbb'd awhile, then beat no more :  
The skies spun like a mighty wheel ;  
545 I saw the trees like drunkards reel,  
And a slight flash sprang o'er my eyes,  
Which saw no farther : he who dies  
Can die no more than then I died.  
O'ertortured by that ghastly ride,  
550 I felt the blackness come and go,  
And strove to wake ; but could not make  
My senses climb up from below :  
I felt as on a plank at sea,  
When all the waves that dash o'er thee,  
555 At the same time upheave and whelm,  
And hurl thee towards a desert realm.  
My undulating life was as  
The fancied lights that fitting pass  
Our shut eyes in deep midnight, when  
560 Fever begins upon the brain ;  
But soon it pass'd, with little pain,  
But a confusion worse than such :  
I own that I should deem it much,  
Dying, to feel the same again ;  
565 And yet I do suppose we must



Feel far more ere we turn to dust :  
 No matter ; I have bared my brow  
 Full in Death's face — before — and now.

## XIV.

“ My thoughts came back ; where was I ? Cold,  
 570 And numb, and giddy : pulse by pulse  
 Life reassumed its lingering hold,  
 And throb by throb : till grown a pang  
 Which for a moment would convulse,  
 My blood reflow'd though thick and chill ;  
 575 My ear with uncouth noises rang,  
 My heart began once more to thrill ;  
 My sight return'd, though dim, alas !  
 And thicken'd, as it were, with glass.  
 Methought the dash of waves was nigh :  
 580 There was a gleam too of the sky,  
 Studded with stars ; — it is no dream ;  
 The wild horse swims the wilder stream !  
 The bright broad river's gushing tide  
 Sweeps, winding onward, far and wide,  
 585 And we are half-way, struggling o'er  
 To yon unknown and silent shore.  
 The waters broke my hollow trance,  
 And with a temporary strength  
 My stiffen'd limbs were rebaptized.  
 590 My courser's broad breast proudly braves  
 And dashes off the ascending waves,  
 And onward we advance !  
 We reach the slippery shore at length,  
 A haven I but little prized,  
 595 For all behind was dark and drear,  
 And all before was night and fear.  
 How many hours of night or day

In those suspended pangs I lay,  
I could not tell ; I scarcely knew  
600 If this were human breath I drew.

## XV.

“ With glossy skin, and dripping mane,  
And reeling limbs, and reeking flank,  
The wild steed’s sinewy nerves still strain  
Up the repelling bank.  
605 We gain the top : a boundless plain  
Spreads through the shadow of the night,  
And onward, onward, onward, seems,  
Like precipices in our dreams,  
To stretch beyond the sight ;  
610 And here and there a speck of white,  
Or scatter’d spot of dusky green,  
In masses broke into the light,  
As rose the moon upon my right.  
But nought distinctly seen  
615 In the dim waste would indicate  
The omen of a cottage gate ;  
No twinkling taper from afar  
Stood like a hospitable star ;  
Not even an ignis-fatuus rose  
620 To make him merry with my woes :  
That very cheat had cheer’d me then !  
Although detected, welcome still,  
Reminding me, through every ill,  
Of the abodes of men.

## XVI.

625 “ Onward we went — but slack and slow ;  
His savage force at length o’erspent,  
*The drooping courser, faint and low,*  
*All feebly foaming went.*

A sickly infant had had power  
 630 To guide him forward in that hour ;  
     But useless all to me.  
 His new-born tameness nought avail'd —  
 My limbs were bound ; my force had fail'd,  
     Perchance, had they been free.  
 635 With feeble effort still I tried  
     To rend the bonds so starkly tied —  
     But still it was in vain ;  
 My limbs were only wrung the more,  
 And soon the idle strife gave o'er,  
 640 Which but prolong'd their pain.  
 The dizzy race seem'd almost done,  
 Although no goal was nearly won :  
 Some streaks announced the coming sun —  
     How slow, alas ! he came !  
 645 Methought that mist of dawning gray  
     Would never dapple into day ;  
     How heavily it roll'd away —  
     Before the eastern flame  
 Rose crimson, and deposed the stars,  
 650 And call'd the radiance from their cars,  
 And fill'd the earth, from his deep throne,  
 With lonely lustre, all his own.

## XVII.

“ Up rose the sun ; the mists were curl'd  
 Back from the solitary world  
 655 Which lay around — behind — before ;  
 What boot'd it to traverse o'er  
 Plain, forest, river ? Man nor brute,  
 Nor dint of hoof, nor print of foot,  
 Lay in the wild luxuriant soil ;  
 660 No sign of travel — none of toil ;

The very air was mute ;  
 And not an insect's shrill small horn,  
 Nor matin bird's new voice was borne  
 From herb nor thicket. Many a verst,  
 665 Panting as if his heart would burst,  
 The weary brute still stagger'd on ;  
 And still we were — or seem'd — alone.  
 At length, while reeling on our way,  
 Methought I heard a courser neigh  
 670 From out yon tuft of blackening firs.  
 Is it the wind those branches stirs ?  
 No, no ! from out the forest prance  
     A trampling troop ; I see them come !  
 In one vast squadron they advance !  
 675 I strove to cry — my lips were dumb.  
 The steeds rush on in plunging pride ;  
 But where are they the reins to guide ?  
 A thousand horse — and none to ride !  
 With flowing tail, and flying mane,  
 680 Wide nostrils — never stretch'd by pain,  
 Mouths bloodless to the bit or rein,  
 And feet that iron never shod,  
 And flanks unscarr'd by spur or rod,  
 A thousand horse, the wild, the free,  
 685 Like waves that follow o'er the sea,  
     Came thickly thundering on,  
 As if our faint approach to meet.  
 The sight re-nerved my courser's feet,  
 A moment staggering, feebly fleet,  
 690 A moment, with a faint low neigh,  
     He answer'd, and then fell ;  
     With gasps and glazing eyes he lay,

664. A *verst* or *verst* is a Russian measure of length equivalent to about two thirds of a mile.

And reeking limbs immoveable ;  
His first and last career is done !  
695 On came the troop — they saw him stoop,  
They saw me strangely bound along  
His back with many a bloody thong :  
They stop — they start — they snuff the air,  
Gallop a moment here and there,  
700 Approach, retire, wheel round and round,  
Then plunging back with sudden bound,  
Headed by one black mighty steed  
Who seem'd the patriarch of his breed,  
Without a single speck or hair  
705 Of white upon his shaggy hide.  
They snort — they foam — neigh — swerve aside,  
And backward to the forest fly,  
By instinct, from a human eye. —  
They left me there to my despair,  
710 Link'd to the dead and stiffening wretch,  
Whose lifeless limbs beneath me stretch,  
Relieved from that unwonted weight,  
From whence I could not extricate  
Nor him nor me — and there we lay  
715 The dying on the dead !  
I little deem'd another day  
Would see my houseless, helpless head.  
  
“ And there from morn till twilight bound,  
I felt the heavy hours toil round,  
720 With just enough of life to see  
My last of suns go down on me,  
In hopeless certainty of mind,  
That makes us feel at length resign'd  
To that which our foreboding years  
725 Presents the worst and last of fears

Inevitable — even a boon,  
Nor more unkind for coming soon ;  
Yet shunn'd and dreaded with such care,  
As if it only were a snare  
730 That prudence might escape :  
At times both wish'd for and implored,  
At times sought with self-pointed sword,  
Yet still a dark and hideous close  
To even intolerable woes,  
735 And welcome in no shape.  
And, strange to say, the sons of pleasure,  
They who have revell'd beyond measure  
In beauty, wassail, wine, and treasure,  
Die calm, or calmer oft than he  
740 Whose heritage was misery :  
For he who hath in turn run through  
All that was beautiful and new,  
Hath nought to hope, and nought to leave ;  
And, save the future, (which is view'd  
745 Not quite as men are base or good,  
But as their nerves may be endued,)  
With nought perhaps to grieve : —  
The wretch still hopes his woes must end,  
And Death, whom he should deem his friend,  
750 Appears, to his distemper'd eyes,  
Arrived to rob him of his prize,  
The tree of his new Paradise.  
To-morrow would have given him all,  
Repaid his pangs, repair'd his fall ;  
755 To-morrow would have been the first  
Of days no more deplored or curst,  
But bright, and long, and beckoning years,  
Seen dazzling through the mist of tears,  
*Guerdon of many a painful hour ;*

760 To-morrow would have given him power  
 To rule, to shine, to smite, to save —  
 And must it dawn upon his grave?

## XVIII.

“The sun was sinking — still I lay  
 Chain’d to the chill and stiffening steed;  
 765 I thought to mingle there our clay;  
 And my dim eyes of death had need,  
 No hope arose of being freed.  
 I cast my last looks up the sky,  
 And there between me and the sun  
 770 I saw the expecting raven fly,  
 Who scarce would wait till both should die  
 Ere his repast begun.  
 He flew, and perch’d, then flew once more,  
 And each time nearer than before;  
 775 I saw his wing through twilight flit,  
 And once so near me he alit  
 I could have smote, but lack’d the strength;  
 But the slight motion of my hand,  
 And feeble scratching of the sand,  
 780 The exerted throat’s faint struggling noise,  
 Which scarcely could be call’d a voice,  
 Together scared him off at length. —  
 I know no more — my latest dream  
 Is something of a lovely star  
 785 Which fix’d my dull eyes from afar,  
 And went and came with wandering beam,  
 And of the cold, dull, swimming, dense  
 Sensation of recurring sense,  
 And then subsiding back to death,  
 790 And then again a little breath,  
 A little thrill, a short suspense,  
 An icy sickness curdling o’er

My heart, and sparks that cross'd my brain —  
A gasp, a throb, a start of pain,  
795 A sigh, and nothing more.

## XIX.

"I woke — Where was I? — Do I see  
A human face look down on me?  
And doth a roof above me close?  
Do these limbs on a couch repose?  
800 Is this a chamber where I lie?  
And is it mortal, yon bright eye  
That watches me with gentle glance?  
I closed my own again once more,  
As doubtful that the former trance  
805 Could not as yet be o'er.  
A slender girl, long-hair'd, and tall,  
Sate watching by the cottage wall:  
The sparkle of her eye I caught,  
Even with my first return of thought;  
810 For ever and anon she threw  
A prying, pitying glance on me  
With her black eyes so wild and free.  
I gazed, and gazed, until I knew  
No vision it could be, —  
815 But that I lived, and was released  
From adding to the vulture's feast.  
And when the Cossack maid beheld  
My heavy eyes at length unseal'd,  
She smiled — and I essay'd to speak,  
820 But fail'd — and she approach'd, and made  
With lip and finger signs that said,  
I must not strive as yet to break  
The silence, till my strength should be  
*Enough to leave my accents free;*



825 And then her hand on mine she laid,  
 And smooth'd the pillow for my head,  
 And stole along on tiptoe tread,  
 And gently oped the door, and spake  
 In whispers — ne'er was voice so sweet!  
 830 Even music follow'd her light feet; —  
 But those she call'd were not awake,  
 And she went forth; but, ere she pass'd,  
 Another look on me she cast,  
 Another sign she made, to say,  
 835 That I had naught to fear, that all  
 Were near at my command or call,  
 And she would not delay  
 Her due return: — while she was gone,  
 Methought I felt too much alone.

## XX.

840 "She came with mother and with sire —  
 What need of more? — I will not tire  
 With long recital of the rest,  
 Since I became the Cossack's guest.  
 They found me senseless on the plain —  
 845 They bore me to the nearest hut —  
 They brought me into life again —  
 Me — one day o'er their realm to reign!  
 Thus the vain fool who strove to glut  
 His rage, refining on my pain,  
 850 Sent me forth to the wilderness,  
 Bound, naked, bleeding, and alone,  
 To pass the desert to a throne, —  
 What mortal his own doom may guess? —  
 Let none despond, let none despair!  
 855 To-morrow the Borysthenes  
 May see our coursers graze at ease  
 Upon his Turkish bank, — and never

Had I such welcome for a river  
As I shall yield when safely there.  
860 Comrades, good night ! ” — The Hetman threw  
His length beneath the oak-tree shade,  
With leafy couch already made,  
A bed nor comfortless nor new  
To him who took his rest whene’er  
865 The hour arrived, no matter where :  
His eyes the hastening slumbers steep.  
And if ye marvel Charles forgot  
To thank his tale, *he* wonder’d not, —  
The king had been an hour asleep.

859. “ Charles, having perceived that the day was lost, and that his only chance of safety was to retire with the utmost precipitation, suffered himself to be mounted on horseback, and with the remains of his army fled to a place called Perewolochna, situated in the angle formed by the junction of the Vorskla and the Borysthenes. Here, accompanied by Mazeppa and a few hundreds of his followers, Charles swam over the latter great river, and proceeding over a desolate country, in danger of perishing with hunger, at length reached the Bog, where he was kindly received by the Turkish pasha. The Russian envoy at the Sublime Porte demanded that Mazeppa should be delivered up to Peter, but the old Hetman of the Cossacks escaped this fate by taking a disease which hastened his death.” *BARROW: Peter the Great.*

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